

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY
February 15, 2022 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and via teleconference.

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

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Zachary Harris, General Counsel
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing & Communications
Terry Norton, Director of Veterinary Services & Wildlife Health
Tom Alexander, Manager of Mosaic
Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

Various members of the public, JIA staff, and press were also present.

Chairman Wilkinson called the committee session to order at 9:33 a.m. Roll was called for members attending in person and those attending via teleconference. Commissioner Williams joined the meeting around 9:45 a.m., and Ms. Burch-Meeks joined at 10:28 a.m.

There were no public comments received online for this meeting.

I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

A. Terry Norton, Director of Veterinary Services & Wildlife Health provided an update on the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (GSTC) veterinary operations and accomplishments. He noted several staffing updates including Rachel Overmeyer’s promotion to Rehabilitation Manger, Jamie Gamby’s promotion to Rehabilitation Tech II, and the hiring of two Rehabilitation Tech I staff members, June Katie Dixon and Makayla Siesta. He further commented on the accomplishments of the GSTC noting that approximately 100 peer reviewed publications and several books and book chapters on wildlife health and veterinary medicine have been published since the center opened in 2007. He highlighted three of the five publications published within the past six months:

- “Health and nutrition of loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the southeastern United States” published in the *Journal of Animal Physiology and Animal Nutrition*.
- The other two publications focused on a pain management drug used in sea turtles:
 - Pharmacokinetic Behavior of Meloxicam in loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), Kemp’s ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) and green (*Chelonia mydas*) sea turtles after subcutaneous administration” published in *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine*
 - “Pharmacokinetics of multi-dose SQ meloxicam in Kemp’s Ridley and green sea turtles” published a special sea turtle issue in the journal *Animal*.

Norton discussed several rehab patients.:

- Coco, a juvenile green turtle who was treated and released off Jekyll in October 2021 with a satellite transmitter, which is still active showing her travels from St. Augustine to Cape Canaveral, Fl.
- Frontera, a kemp's ridley, who came to the Center with many life-threatening dredge injuries. The team treated her wounds, fractures, and eyes over several months, and she was able to be released back into the wild.
- Genie, a loggerhead sea turtle suffered a boat strike to the nasal and skull region. She had difficulty swimming normally and did not eat for four months, during which time she received IV nutrition and cold laser therapy. Her injuries are healed, she is swimming and eating normally, and she should be released soon.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, thanked Norton and his team, commenting on the significance of being able to operate a hospital on Jekyll, not just an entertainment aquarium.

B. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, introduced Tom Alexander who has been a historical interpreter with JIA since 2016, and he has continued in that role as well as now managing the Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum.

Tom Alexander, Manager of Mosaic, provided an update on Museum operations. He first reviewed the recent changes to the management and operating model noting his position as Museum Manager, the Museum Assistant Manager, Will Story, and Museum Lead Interpreter, Emily Robertson. He mentioned that a collaborative model is being utilized to properly manage the entire Historic Resources department.

Along with this collaborative model, Mosaic has reset many objectives to improve the overall function of the museum. These objectives include: improving staff morale, increasing communications with all internal departments, increasing the variety and quality of programs offered by Mosaic, updating marketing strategies, implementing a structured training program for interpreters, and creating efficient staff schedules. Alexander ended his presentation by highlighting the financial successes seen at the museum which includes generating \$51,000 from Holly Jolly Light Tours during the 2021 season and January 2022 seeing the best revenues when compared to the past five years.

There were no public comments.

II. Finance Committee

A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair summarized the January Financials including an overview of Revenues, Expenses, Net Operating Cash, Traffic Statistics, and Hotel Statistics.

- Revenues were \$2,115,279.
- Expenses were \$2,179,073.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$63,794.
- Total Traffic Counts were 80,539 vehicles.
- Hotel Revenues were reported at \$2.2 million with a 34.7% Occupancy Rate.

There were no public comments.

III Human Resources Committee

- A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, presented several policy updates. The first two recommended updates impact the Recruitment and Selection Policy. Upon review of the policy handbook, J. Johnson recommended that that section on Employment of Relatives and Non-Fraternization should be established as its own policy that will better assist supervisors as they need to reference the policy manual. The Board first considered updating the Recruitments and Selection Policy by removing the Employment of Relatives and Non-Fraternization section.

A motion to recommend Approval of the Updated Recruitment and Selection Policy as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Atkins. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. The Board then considered adding the Recruitment and Selection Policy as a separate and new section in the manual.

A motion to recommend Approval of Adding the Employment of Relatives Policy as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Atkins. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. J. Johnson presented an update to the Employee Records Policy which addresses the use of electronic systems and states that personnel records will be kept in accordance with the records retention scheduled.

A motion to recommend Approval of the Updated Employee Records Policy as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Atkins. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. J. Johnson also presented an update to the Employee Pay Policy which incorporates the previously standalone Direct Deposit Policy and clarifies additional items such as: what is considered a standard work week, payroll deductions, and other basic rules relating to employee pay.

A motion to recommend Approval of the Updated Employee Pay Policy as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Atkins and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. J. Johnson then presented the Immigration Law Compliance Policy as a new policy to be added to the manual. This policy defines E-Verify and the explains the procedures utilized to establish identity and verify work eligibility in accordance with the guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

A motion to recommend Approval of Adding the Immigration Law Compliance Policy as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Atkins and seconded Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

IV. Marketing Committee

- A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing & Communications, provided an update highlighting the following items:
- The 75TH Anniversary Soiree was held on January 28th and featured one-of-a-kind entertainment by the internationally acclaimed synchronized swimmers the Aqualillies as well as an artist who created a live painting of the evening, which will be displayed in the Jekyll Island Museum, Mosaic.

- A “throwback” billboard sign has been installed at the end of the Jekyll Causeway that is reminiscent of the original State Era “Fabulous Jekyll Island” sign. A planter has also been designed by the JIA Landscape team to celebrate the anniversary.
- The latest issue of 31•81 was distributed to approximately 30,000 targeted lists and an additional 10,000 subscribers.
- The new Visitor Guide is also available. The number of printed copies has been reduced as JIA increasingly promotes of the online version of the guide.
- A new social media presence has been established for Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum.
- Digital Performance saw improvements during CY 2021 including a 9.3% increase in total engagements and a 145% increase in total impressions on social media as well as a 29% increase in website sessions, compared to the previous year.

Board Members were provided with copies of the 2022 Visitor Guide, the 2021 Jekyll Island Progress report, and Volume 5.1 of 31•81, which are all available online.

There were no public comments.

V. Legislative Committee

- A. Trip Tollison, Legislative Committee Chair, provided an update noting that the Georgia House of Representatives passed the amended budget which includes funds for the Public Safety Facility on Jekyll Island.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, commented on a news article which incorrectly reported that \$15 million was included in the amended budget allocated to Jekyll Island for deferred maintenance. He clarified that this number was reported in error.

There were no public comments.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability presented Request for Proposal (RFP) #369 for a Georgia Sea Turtle Center Affiliate Scientist (GSTC). This proposal would establish a contractual agreement with a GSTC Affiliate Scientist associated with an academic institution. The GSTC anticipates allocating between \$60,000 and \$80,000 to fund an Affiliate Scientist and seeks to maximize the return on investment for the JIA and the GSTC by reallocating funds that would otherwise go to salary and benefits for an on-staff scientist. Under the proposed arrangement, staff anticipates the leverage of additional investments from the Affiliated Scientist’s host institution in the form of foundational funds that could support graduate students, technicians, and research activities as well as the leverage of additional grant funding.

Carswell noted that additional legal review is needed before the RFP can be released.

A motion to recommend approval of RFP #369 for a Georgia Sea Turtle Center Affiliate Scientist, pending further legal review was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Jones Hooks, Executive Director presented Resolution #R-2022-1 Supporting Fiber-to-the Premises Broadband Networks and Infrastructure on Jekyll Island. He provided background

information on the topic explaining that Governor Kemp has made it a priority to expand broadband in Georgia, particularly rural communities, and an appointed committee is focusing on funding broadband expansion.

Through the Golden Isles Development authority, Ronin Technology Advisors, reached out to the JIA to discuss potentially providing fiber-to-the-premises broadband networks and infrastructure on Jekyll Island in the future. This company has also presented to the Glynn County Board of Commissioners.

Resolution #R-2022-1 outlines support for improved telecommunications technology that provides enhanced internet access and communication capabilities to Jekyll Island residents and businesses, and it is not a binding agreement with Ronin Technology Advisors.

Mr. Krueger supported the Resolution as a good start to providing quality broadband access to Jekyll Island, reinforcing the importance of resident access as well as commercial. He also commented on the necessity of having a buried network infrastructure on Jekyll Island.

A motion to recommend Adoption of Resolution #R-2022-1 Supporting Fiber-to-the Premises Broadband Networks and Infrastructure on Jekyll Island was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the request for Proclaiming April as Jekyll Island's Safe Digging Month. He explained that the Glynn County Local Utility Coordinating Council requested that JIA declare April as Safe Digging Month to encourage all employees, contractors, and residents to take precautions and call Georgia 811 before digging in order to avoid damaging underground infrastructure.

Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant, read the Proclamation into the record.

A motion to recommend Approval of April 2022 as Jekyll Island's Safe Digging Month and Accept the Proclamation as presented by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, provided an Operations Update highlighting on-going projects:
- 11,205 linear feet of concrete bike paths are scheduled for renovations beginning in early March 2022 with an end date of April 15, 2022.
 - At Summer Waves, a pool liner has been installed at the Man'O War Slide and the interior and exterior of the slides have been painted. Additionally, a splash pad expansion is under construction.
 - Wastewater Plant updates include replacement of a grit screen and replacement of all residential meters. Additionally, JIA applied for Recovery Act Funding that is still pending, since no awards have been announced yet.
 - New Convention Center Furniture is scheduled to ship in March 2022.
 - JIA has performed vegetative management to 1.35 miles of the Jekyll Causeway and crews have collected: 65 sixty-gallon bags of trash, 1 hot water heater, 5 tires, 1 floating dock, and 2 trailer loads of lumber.

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- E. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, Presented the Executive Director’s Report. He discussed the following points:
- JIA has 13 employees with twenty plus years of service.
 - JIA Fleet Management was recognized by the Office of Fleet Management and the Department of Administrative Services for their tenth report in a row where they received Rank 1, the highest possible ranking.
 - Golf Course Improvement Strategy
 - The archaeological report is being reviewed at the state level by the State Historic Preservation Office. They have requested additional information from Terracon, our contractors for the Phase I and II Archaeological Investigations.
 - The National Golf Foundation (NGF) has begun reviewing and analyzing data on Jekyll Island golf and how those number related to findings throughout the country. NGF will present their findings at an upcoming Board meeting.
 - Our partners from GA Audubon began the initial phase of treatment/restoration in the designated areas between the Jekyll Island Club Beach Pavilion and Holiday Inn to expand our existing Beach Prairies. They began treating the turf grass in early February.
 - New Castle acquired Holiday Inn Resort for \$41 Million with equity raised through crowdfunding.
 - The Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority sent a letter to the Board congratulating them on JIA celebrating its 75th anniversary.
 - Jekyll was named a 2021 Tree City USA and received a Growth Award from the Arbor Day Foundation. Hooks recognize Cliff Gawron for his efforts in educating businesses and residents about the importance of preserving our trees.
- F. Chairman Mr. Wilkinson presented the Chairman Comments. He thanked the JIA staff for their work and noted how impressive this month’s reports were,

There were two public comments:

- Al Tate thanked the JIA staff and Board for their efforts in positively responding to the concerns of the public and Jekyll Island residents. He also stated that natural resources and assets on Jekyll Island should be made a priority over revenue sources.
- Beverly Hopkins thanked Mr. Hooks for clarifying the purpose of Resolution #R-2022-1, and she conveyed delight in the new retro billboard as well as the new planter.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting
February 15, 2022

The roll was called at 11:20 a.m., and all members were present either in-person or via teleconference.

Action Items

1. Mr. Kruger moved to accept the minutes of the January 18, 2022 board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gross. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the Updated Recruitment and Selection Policy carried by unanimous consent.
3. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the Addition of the Employment of Relatives Policy carried by unanimous consent.
4. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the Updated Employee Records Policy carried by unanimous consent.
5. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the Updated Employee Pay Policy carried by unanimous consent.
6. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the Addition of the Immigration Law Compliance Policy carried by unanimous consent.
7. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve RFP #369 for a Georgia Sea Turtle Center Affiliate Scientist, pending additional legal review, carried by unanimous consent.
8. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to adopt Resolution #R-2022-1 Supporting Fiber-to-the Premises Broadband Networks and Infrastructure on Jekyll Island carried by unanimous consent.
9. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve April 2022 as Jekyll Island's Safe Digging Month and to Accept the Proclamation as presented by staff carried by unanimous consent.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krueger and was seconded by Mr. Willard. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.