

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY
August 16, 2022 – Approve Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and via teleconference for their Annual Meeting.

Members Present: Mr. Dale Atkins, Chairman
Mr. Bob Krueger, Vice Chairman
Mr. Bill Gross, Secretary/Treasurer
Dr. Buster Evans
Mr. Ruel Joyner
Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks
Commissioner Mark Williams (via Teleconference)
Mr. Glen Willard (via Teleconference)
Mr. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr (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
Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources
Davide Zailo, GSTC Research Program Manager
Kevin Udell, Senior Sales Manager
Brian Lee, Digital Content Manager
Dennis Gailey, Director of Public Safety
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

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

Chairman Atkins called the committee session to order at 9:31 a.m. Roll was called for members attending in person and via teleconference. All members were present, and a quorum was established.

JIA received no online public comments for this meeting.

JIA Board Member Appointments Update

Chairman Atkins welcomed Mr. George Ruel Joyner, Jr. who was appointed to the JIA Board on July 11, 2022 by Governor Kemp to succeed Mr. Trip Tollison. Atkins also announced that the Mr. Krueger, Dr. Evans, and Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks were reappointed to serve on the JIA Board. The terms for all four Board members will expire July 1, 2026.

The Chairman appointed Mr. Joyner to the following committees: Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, Legislative, and Committee of the Whole.

Special Presentations

- A. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, announced that Allyson Jackson, General Manager of the Jekyll Island Convention Center has retired from ASM Global. He spoke to Allyson's history with the Convention Center, noting her involvement and influence before the current facility even began operations, as she was part of the presentation team with SMG, and how her

connection to and love for the Golden Isles proved significant for the success of the Convention Center under her leadership.

Bob McClintock, ASM Global’s Executive Vice President of Convention Centers, highlighted Jackson’s invaluable experience gained during her time with the Salt Palace Convention Center, her ability to manage people, and most importantly her love for the Golden Isles community and her staff. He further emphasized Jackson’s work and dedication to the Penguin Project and all the children who benefit from that program.

Allyson Jackson spoke about her time with the Convention Center starting with the first event held at the Center ten years prior, the graduation for the College of Coastal Georgia. The Convention Center opened with eighteen full-time employees, seven of which still remain on staff, and one who has returned, after spending five years expanding her skill set, to serve as the new General Manager, Tabitha Mayers. Jackson discussed the ebbs and flows of the Convention Center operations, particularly the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it, and the highs that followed it. She then thanked her team for her incredible team for their work and dedication.

The JIA Board and Mr. McClintock thanked Allyson for her time devoted to the Convention Center.

B. Glynn County EMA Director, Andy Leanza provided an update on Hurricane Preparedness along with the Deputy Director, Sharon Courson. Their presentation highlighted the following points:

- Hurricane Season runs from June 1st to November 30th, with the peak of the season falling between August and October.
- The forecast for the 2022 season includes: 19 tropical storms, 9 hurricanes, and 4 major hurricanes.
- Since no coastal area is truly protected from storms and hurricanes, it’s important to always be prepared for the maximum impact.
- Transparency regarding evacuation and re-entry is a priority when discussing preparedness with the community. There are now three evacuation zones in Glynn County which allows for a phased evacuation when needed.
- The hazard mitigation update is underway.
- A new Emergency Operations Center has been included in the proposed 2022 SPLOST project list.

I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

A. Davide Zailo, GSTC Research Program Manager, provided an update on Sea Turtle Nesting highlighting the following points:

- The 2022 season has been a record setting year for the State of Georgia with over 4030 sea turtle nests being documented along the 100 miles of coastline.
- 240 nests are currently on Jekyll Island, which is 36 higher than the previous record.
- Over 9,000 hatchlings have been produced on Jekyll, but studies show only 1 out of 1000 hatchlings survive to adulthood, which is 30-35 year.
- Jekyll Island is home to one of the longest running sea turtle projects in the world, having tracked sea turtles since the 1960’s.
- Historically, flipper tags were applied to the flipper of a turtle, but now more genetic techniques have been implemented to determine how frequently an animal is returning to an area. This tracking is a collaborative effort across surrounding coastal states.

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- The increase in nesting can be traced back to the various protections enacted since the loggerhead sea turtles were classified as threatened by the Endangered Species Act in 1978, which have improved the probability of sea turtles reaching adulthood.
 - A 2% increase in nesting each year is required to reach recovery goals for the Northern Recovery Unit (GA, SC, NC). It's currently at approximately 1.3%.
 - Continued investment in nest protection, fisheries regulation, and education is essential.
 - The GSTC continues to educate guests through ride-along programs, Turtle and Sunrise Walks, and by distributing over 1,600 turtle-friendly keychain flashlights to nighttime beachgoers.
- B. In the consideration of time, an update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Summer Dredging was deferred.
- C. Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources, provided an update on the Historic District's 2022 Fiscal Year:
- Museum revenues totaled \$1.132 million, a record best.
 - The National Historic Landmark District (NHLD) received 50,025 visitors.
 - Preservation updates include: completing phase I of the Chichota Ruins, painting the JIA administration buildings, continued work on Hollybourne Cottage, nomination of Great Dunes to the National Registry of Historic Places, and the completion of the Cypress Breezeway at the Jekyll Island Club Resort.
 - Curation and archive updates include: the deep cleaning of collections storage and two historic cottages, installation of the first phase of the 75th Anniversary Mosaic exhibit, processing backlogged documents, and implementation of a pest management system for buildings in the NHLD.
 - Several new educational programs were added including: Pistols & Privateers, Dolphin Club Days. Jekyll Before the Millionaires, and Louis Tiffany at the Jekyll Island Club.
 - Mosaic has a new Facebook page, and the NHLD was featured on Jekyll Island's TikTok account.

There were no public comments.

II. Finance Committee

- A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair, summarized the June and July Financials including an overview of Revenues, Expenses, Net Operating Cash, Traffic Statistics, and Hotel Revenues for each month.
- June Financials:
 - Revenues were \$4,895,926.
 - Expenses were \$3,206,867.
 - Net Operating Cash Income was \$1,689,059.
 - Total Traffic Counts were 137,344 vehicles.
 - Year-to-date Revenues reported by hotels were \$36.2 million.
 - July Financials
 - Revenues were \$6,384,497.
 - Expenses were \$3,366,944.
 - Net Operating Cash Income was \$3,017,553.
 - Total Traffic Counts were 142,793 vehicles.
 - Year-to-date Revenues reported by hotels were \$45.8 million.

B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, provided a summary of the 2022 Year-End Financials.

- The total revenue budget was \$30.4 million, and the actual budget came in \$38.7 million.
- Expenses came in at \$28.2 million, which was \$1,000,000 less than budget. Johnson noted the impressiveness of this considering the higher revenue and the increase to staff pay earlier in the year.
- Net-operating income was \$10.5 million. From that income, the JIA funded \$3.1 million into the board designation contribution funds, which includes the Fire Equipment Fund, Tourism Development Fund, and the Water/Wastewater Funds.
- \$4.4 million remains after contributing to those designated funds.

C. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, presented Additional Capital Requests for Board Consideration. Upon completion and reconciliation of Fiscal Year 2022-year end financials, \$4,444,767.93 remained in net income after all designated fund contributions and previously approved capital equipment and projects requests. Of that, staff recommended contributing \$2,002,525.93 to JIA cash reserves as well as using \$2,442,242 to fund capital equipment and projects including Convention Center improvements, Golf Course improvements and renovations, Summer Waves improvements, additional funding for the Public Safety Complex and ladder truck payment, equipment for various departments, paving roads at the campground, and the purchase of a golf cart or UTV for the Campground. These projects would be to be paid from the FY2022 operating funds.

Additionally, staff requested approval for capital equipment and projects from the Fire Equipment Fund, Water/Wastewater Fund and the Public Improvement Funds. This includes:

- \$54,000.00 from the Water/Wastewater Reserves for the purchase of lift station pumps and a few fire hydrants;
- \$61,353.00 from the Fire Equipment Funds for replacement of 12 sets of turnout gear and an ATV; and
- \$583,727.88 from the Public Improvement Fund for greenhouse completion, matching grant funds for paving and stormwater issues, and equipment for Conservation, Park Services, Landscaping, and Roads and Grounds, including the replacement of two beach wheelchairs that are complementary for guests to use.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director noted that each project has been reviewed to ensure it aligns with the approved Strategic Plan. He also noted the significance of being able to include over \$2 million in cash reserves, which has never happened before.

A motion to recommend approval of the proposed Additional Capital Requests as presented by staff was made by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented an update for two grants available to the JIA:

1. UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant presented JIA staff with a proposal to accept a \$50,000.00 grant for stormwater infrastructure at the Public Safety Complex site. Per the proposed scope of work, JIA will work with UGA and their contractors to install an enhanced wet swale/bioswale demonstration project at the Jekyll Island Public Safety Campus.

A motion to recommend accepting the grant from UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant for stormwater infrastructure at the Public Safety Complex site in the amount of \$50,000 with the understanding that a \$50,000 match from JIA will be required was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Ms. Burch-Meeks. The motion carried unanimously.

2. The Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) ADA office reached out to see if JIA had any shovel-ready ADA specific projects required funding. Jensen recommended funding for a fourth ADA compliant restroom at the campground.

A motion to recommend accepting the reimbursement grant of \$420,000 from GSFIC for the construction of a fourth ADA compliant restroom at the campground was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

III. Human Resources Committee

- A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, presented a Fiscal Year 2022 Staffing Level Update. The JIA has an average monthly roster of 267 full-time and part-time employees. During FY22, 115 employees left. This was a 9% decrease from the previous year. 88 employees left voluntarily and 27 involuntarily. Of the 115 employees who left voluntarily, 53 were part-time employees while 35 were full-time. The reasons for those who left voluntarily were as follows:

- 22% - Opportunity
- 39% - Personal
- 17% - Relocation
- 9% - Availability
- 9% - Abandoned Job
- 4% - Retirement

J. Johnson then broke down the data even further differentiating the reasoning between full-time and part-time employees, and she discussed the turnover trends JIA has seen since FY14 which has fluctuated through the years. Turnover did decrease from FY21 to FY22, and Johnson anticipates more of a decrease in FY23. Additional data showed that that FY22 had the lowest average number of part-time employees since 2014, which is something she will continue to monitor to ensure significant positions are filled appropriately.

Lastly, she provided an update on worker's compensation claims. The goal number of claims is nine or fewer each year, but there were ten claims during FY22. However, this is still a decrease in claims over the past few years, which can be attributed to additional monthly safety talks and post-claim discussions with employees to prevent recurring accidents and injuries.

There were no public comments.

IV. Marketing Committee

- A. Kevin Udell, Senior Sales Manager, provided a Group Business update for Fiscal Year 2022. He compared the FY22 numbers to FY19, which was the best year on record. In FY19 there

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were 80 groups with 34,000 attendees, and at the end of FY22 there were 78 groups with 39,000 attendees, so overall FY22 could be considered the new best record year.

Udell then moved to current and future numbers. FY23 has 82 groups booked for the year and FY24 has 48 groups. This can equate to 107,000 room nights and \$22 million direct island hotel revenues. Additionally, FY23 groups consist of 57 returning groups and 24 new groups.

Lastly, Udell noted that KB Advisory Group has been retained to conduct an analysis and plan to better balance the demand of group-leisure business on Jekyll. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, added that this study will assist in determining how to meet the demand of legacy groups, groups who have been coming to Jekyll for years and continued during the construction period of the Convention Center, and balancing those needs with the leisure travel Jekyll receives as well.

- B. Brian Lee, Digital Content Manager, presented the report from the Marketing Department, highlighting the following items:
- Through media outreach to various publications, 933 placements were achieved during FY22 with a total reach of 11.4 billion and a total publicity value of approximately \$13 million. Zero advertising dollars were spent for these publications.
 - The Jekyll Island website visitation was up 6% for FY22 with the average user session lasting 2 minutes and 37 seconds, and the bounce rate was down 29%, meaning users are engaging with more than a single webpage per visit. Additionally, due to site improvements, load times have reduced by 31%.
 - The E-Newsletter has over 82,000 contacts in the database, a 22% increase from FY21.
 - Social Media outreach continues to impress with a 310.2% increase in Facebook impressions, 20.8% growth in Instagram followers, and the launch of a TikTok account.
 - The 75th Anniversary Street Party was held on August 6th in the Beach Village. The community event included live entertainment, music, a stilt walker, and face painting. Additionally, a highlight of the event was the unveiling of a mural created by Wylie Caudill from Lexington, Kentucky. After being selected for the mural project, staff learned that he is the great grandson of Tallu Fish, the first museum curator for Jekyll.
 - Select Marketing staff attended the Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference earlier in September, and there it was announced that the conference would return to Jekyll Island in 2023.
 - The newest brand video for Jekyll Island was shared with the JIA Board.

There were no public comments.

V. Legislative Committee

No report.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, and Brian Lee, Digital Content Manager, presented the request to issue Request for Proposal (RFP)#370 for a Ticketing and Point of Sale System. The current ticketing and point-of-sale efforts are fragmented between multiple systems and do not fulfill the needs of JIA. The ideal ticketing and POS solution will allow onsite and online ticket sales to be consolidated into a singular system, provide improved functionality across ticketing, event registration, memberships, and reporting, and ultimately

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provide an improved purchasing experience for customers and greater ease-of-use for JIA staff.

A motion to recommend issuing RFP # 370 for a Ticketing and Point of Sale System as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the request to Issue RFP #371 for Construction of the Public Safety Complex. Jericho Design Group has completed the design for the complex, and they have been contracted to manage the bidding process for this RFP and oversee the construction of their drawings.

A motion to recommend issuing RFP # 371 for Construction of the Public Safety Facility pending additional legal review was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Dennis Gailey, Director of Public Safety, provided an update on Rental Inspections. The JIA rental inspection program is a part of the Rental Licensing Agreement that focuses on encouraging short-term rentals to provide a high-quality, safe, and sanitary lodging experience. The checklist for these inspections include housekeeping practices, pest control, waste disposal, basic household amenities, proper insurance, fire/life safety devices, and guest experience surveys. The fire department, through the fire marshal's office, conduct these inspections on a rotating basis, meeting with rental companies on-site to identify and correct any deficiencies.

Gailey shared a success story from this program explaining that last year there was a fire in a rental unit, and the occupant was able to use the required fire extinguisher to mitigate the damage and the potential severity of the fire by extinguishing it in the early stage. He also noted that approximately forty inspections are conducted each year, and they hope to double that number over the next year.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, noted that the real estate companies on Jekyll Island support this program and were instrumental in implementation. He reiterated the importance of this program regarding safety and further noted that the program has assisted JIA in tracking rental units and bed tax revenues.

- D. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the consideration of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Mercer University. Hooks explained that the upstairs space at the Beach Village was purposely designed to be a medical facility, noting the oversized elevator what could accommodate a gurney. The Southeast Georgia Health System was planned to be the original tenants, but due to national legislation and revenue losses, they were unable to occupy the space. Since then, JIA staff has been searching for a partner to lease the space. Through conversations with Dr. Evans, JIA learned that an Oversight Committee Member, Georgia House Representative Matt Hatchett, is also the director of development for Mercer University. After a few conversations and a tour of the space, Representative Hatchett presented the idea to the Dean of the Mercer University School of Medicine (Mercer), Dr. Jean Sumner. Additional calls and meetings were held between JIA and Mercer, and after the Board approved \$300,000 for a build out of the second floor of the Beach Village, a MOA was created and approved by JIA staff and Mercer.

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The MOA calls for JIA to complete the buildout of the space and provide the architectural fees for the build out that are responsive to Mercer’s design. Mercer would occupy the facility and be solely responsible for all costs and legal compliance associated with hiring and employing all staff, including medical professionals and support staff. Mercer would be responsible for establishing the hours of operation, but the facility must be open seven days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. May through August and no less than five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. September through April. The initial lease term would be for five years, and during the first three years, Mercer would lease the space for \$10 a year, and after the third year, Mercer would pay the going rent rate, comparable to other commercial leases in the Beach Village. Mercer would also be responsible for common area maintenance and operational costs.

Hooks noted JIA has begun exploring possible funding through the Rural Innovation Fund which is managed by the Department of Community Affairs

A motion to recommend approval of the Memorandum of Agreement with Mercer Medicine, LLC to operate a health clinic on Jekyll Island as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Proposed 2023 JIA Board Meeting Dates for consideration. Due to limited space availability at Convention Center and the Morgan Center, the May 2023 meeting will need to be held on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Additionally, there will be no meeting for the month of July, and the December meeting will be tentatively held on the second Tuesday of the month.

A motion to recommend approval of the proposed 2023 JIA Board Meeting dates as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- F. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director’s report highlighting the following items:
- Traffic trends on Jekyll Island for 2021 and 2022 mirrored each other from month to month. Staff will continue to monitor these trends to plan for the future.
 - The Golf Improvement Plan is scheduled to be presented at the September Board meeting.
 - Keep Golden Isles Beautiful is partnering with JIA for beach cleanups.
 - Dr. Evans received the H.M. Fulbright Distinguished Service Award from GAEL.
 - Ben Rushing and the JIA vehicle maintenance crew continue to lead the state with their rating from the Office of Fleet Management, receiving twelve Tier One ratings in a row.

- G. Mr. Atkins presented the Chairman’s Comments. He thanked Mr. Hooks, JIA Staff, and the Board for their efforts and support.

There were no public comments.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Annual Board Meeting
August 16, 2022

The roll was called at 11:46 a.m., and all members were present either in-person or via teleconference.

Action Items

1. Mr. Joyner moved to accept the minutes of the June 21, 2022 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krueger. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Mr. Gross moved to ratify, affirm, and adopt the previous actions, approvals, appointments, or other actions taken by this Board of Directors as a whole, that were within the Board's authority, from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion was unanimously approved.
3. Dr. Evans nominated Mr. Krueger to continue the position of Vice Chair. Mr. Krueger consented to the nomination. There were no other nominations, and therefore the Chair declared Mr. Krueger elected to the Vice Chair position.
4. Mr. Willard nominated Mr. Gross to continue the position of Treasurer/Secretary. Mr. Gross consented to the nomination. There were no other nominations, and therefore the Chair declared Mr. Gross elected to the Treasurer/Secretary position.
5. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the proposed Additional Capital Requests as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
6. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to accept the grant from UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant for stormwater infrastructure at the Public Safety Complex site in the amount of \$50,000 with the understanding that a \$50,000 match from JIA carried by unanimous approval.
7. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to issue RFP # 370 for a Ticketing and Point of Sale System as recommended by staff carried by unanimous approval.
8. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to issue RFP # 371 for Construction of the Public Safety Facility, pending additional legal review carried by unanimous approval.
9. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Mercer Medicine, LLC to operate a health clinic on Jekyll Island as recommended by staff carried by unanimous approval.
10. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the proposed 2023 JIA Board Meeting dates as recommended by staff carried by unanimous approval.

Announcements

1. Per Chairman Atkins's request, Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant to the Director, read the Committee Appointments into the record as follows:

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION/
CONSERVATION**

Bob Krueger, Chair
Dale Atkins
Mark Williams
Joe Wilkinson
Buster Evans

FINANCE

Bill Gross, Chair
Dale Atkins
Bob Krueger
Joe Wilkinson
Mark Williams
Buster Evans
Glen Willard
Joy Burch-Meeks
Ruel Joyner

HUMAN RESOURCES

Buster Evans, Chair
Dale Atkins
Bob Krueger
Joe Wilkinson
Bill Gross
Ruel Joyner

MARKETING

Joy Burch-Meeks, Chair
Dale Atkins
Bob Krueger
Glen Willard
Ruel Joyner
Joe Wilkinson

LEGISLATIVE

Glen Willard, Chair
Dale Atkins
Bob Krueger
Bill Gross
Mark Williams
Ruel Joyner
Joy Burch Meeks

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Dale Atkins, Chair
Bob Krueger
Bill Gross
Joe Wilkinson
Mark Williams
Joy Burch-Meeks
Buster Evans
Glen Willard
Ruel Joyner

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Joyner. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.