

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY
May 23, 2023 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at the Jekyll Island Club Resort Morgan Center and via teleconference.

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

Members Absent: Commissioner Mark Williams
Mr. Ruel Joyner

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Jenna Johnsons, Director of Human Resources
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing
Yank Moore, Director of Conservation
Dennis Gailey, Director of Public Safety
Zach Harris, General Counsel
Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager
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 9:30 a.m. All Board members were present in-person except for Commissioner Mark Williams and Mr. Ruel Joyner who were both absent.

No public comments were received online prior to this meeting.

I. Legislative Committee

Glen Willard, Chair

- A. Mr. Willard, Legislative Committee Chair, introduced the Honorable Rick Townsend, Georgia House of Representatives of the 179th District. Representative Townsend presented Jones Hooks, Executive Director, Georgia House Resolution 690 which highlights Hooks’s service to Jekyll Island during his fifteen-year tenure. Rep. Townsend spoke to Hooks’s vision for Jekyll Island and how significant that vision was to the successful revitalization of Jekyll Island.

There were no public comments.

II. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

Bob Krueger, Chair

- A. Yank Moore, Director of Conservation, provided a brief update on the Beach Prairie Project and restoration. The partnership with Georgia Audubon continues as they received a grant of \$42,000 to further conservation and grassland restoration efforts on Jekyll

Island. This grant will fund an additional three acres of beachfront maritime grassland in front of Holiday Inn Resort. The news of this grant prompted the Savannah Morning News to publish a story highlighting Jekyll's conservation efforts.

There was one public comment:

- Ben Carswell, Jekyll Island resident and former JIA employee, spoke to Mr. Hooks's pivotal and transformative role in the environmental conservation of Jekyll Island State Park. Carswell highlighted Hooks's leadership and how that leadership fundamentally transformed and strengthened the culture of JIA, emphasizing Hooks's support of having a dedicated voice for Jekyll Island conservation on the JIA executive staff. Carswell thanked Jones for his dedication and stewardship.

III. Finance Committee

Bill Gross, Chair

- A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair, summarized the April Financials including an overview of Revenues, Expenses, Net Operating Cash, Traffic Statistics, and Hotel Revenues for the month.
- Revenues were \$3,535,864.
 - Expenses were \$2,578,758.
 - Net Operating Cash Income was \$957,106.
 - Total Traffic Counts were 131,089 vehicles.
 - Year to date revenues reported by hotels totaled \$21.9 million.
- B. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the funding request for Mercer Clinic FF&E for consideration. He first noted that the buildout of the facility is on schedule to turn over the keys to Mercer in June. However, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has not decided on whether or not to award JIA funds for the clinic's necessary furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) through DCA's OneGeorgia Rural Innovation Grant which the JIA submitted an application for in October 2022. The DCA Board has deferred the application since their November 2022 meeting. The original requested amount total of \$450,000, but Mercer was able to secure an x-ray machine, reducing the requested amount to \$259,809.45. The next DCA meeting will be held at the end of June 2023, and DCA agreed in January that if JIA spent the money for FF&E and were awarded the requested grant, it could be reimbursed.

In order to keep the project on schedule, while JIA waits to hear a final decision from DCA, Hooks requested the Board approve \$259,809.45 plus a 10% contingency for the remaining FF&E needs.

A motion to recommend approving up to \$285,790.40 from current year funds to be used for purchasing specific FF&E needed for the Mercer Medical Clinic on Jekyll Island, was made by Mr. Wilkinson and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

IV. Human Resources Committee

Buster Evans, Chair

- A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, presented updates to the Pay Plan Policy. Updates to this policy includes clarification of the hiring ranges established between the minimum and mid-point of the pay range which is determined by the required and preferred qualifications for the position as well as clarification of the considerations of previous earned merit increases when determining the pay for current employees who apply for other positions within the JIA.

A motion to recommend approving the updated Pay Plan Policy was made by Mr. Kruger and seconded by Wilkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources presented updates to the Performance Management Policy. The purpose of this revision was to bring the outdated electronic procedures up-to-date and reflect JIA's current practices. The updates also clarify when performance evaluations are expected to be completed, to align with fiscal year budget planning.

A motion to recommend approving the updated Performance Management Policy was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, presented updates to the Conduct and Performance Policy. Updates to this policy include the inclusion of examples of expected behavior and examples of behavior that would be considered inappropriate.

A motion to recommend approving the updated Conduct and Performance Policy was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

V. Marketing Committee

- A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing, presented the department's report.
- Jekyll Island was featured in several publications including:
 - Trip Advisor's "5 Trips to book with your tax refund this year"
 - People magazines "25 Things to Do Eat & See". Watching the sunset at Driftwood Beach was listed at number 19.
 - Good Day Atlanta filmed a segment on Jekyll Island featuring Historic Resources, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, and the Jekyll Island Club Resort.
 - The Sea Turtle Season campaign has launched. Promotions for this campaign include:
 - Paid digital media and Search Engine Marketing
 - Dedicated e-blasts to leisure subscribers
 - Media tours of summer programming
 - Co-op placements with Golden Isles CVB
 - Co-op placements with Explore Georgia
 - A new billboard was created for Summer Wave. The non-traditional billboard style was designed in-house and created in collaboration with the billboard company.
 - JIA participated in a Georgia CVB student project. A 4th grade student from Blue Mound, IL picked Georgia for his class project, and the JIA Marketing team sent him a Junior Ranger Guide along with a few extra Jekyll Island branded items.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, further highlighted the publication features Hawkins mentioned. He thanked the Marketing Team for their efforts in ensuring Jekyll Island is the subject of positive destination driven features.

There were no public comments.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the Jekyll Island Convention Center Management Agreement Renewal for consideration. The fifth amendment to the qualified management agreement for Jekyll Island Convention Center with SMG, which is a subsidiary of ASM Global, one of the most successful and largest venue management companies in North America. This proposed amendment clarifies that the management term is extended through June 30, 2024 and will be automatically renewed for five years as of January 1, 2024, and it will be subject to JIA's right to extend for an additional five year terms commencing on July 1, 2029. This fifth amendment clarifies language that was already approved in the fourth amendment and removed ambiguity.

A motion to recommend approving the fifth amendment to the qualified management agreement for the Jekyll Island Convention Center was made by Mr. Kruger and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Dennis Gailey, Director of Public Safety presented the Renewal Contract with Glynn-Brunswick 911 Center for consideration. The proposed agreement allows the Glynn Brunswick 911 Center (GB 911) staff to dispatch the Jekyll Island Fire Department (JIFD) units directly from the 911 center instead of forwarding calls to GSP Radio Operators for final dispatch. This agreement started in the fall of 2021 and has improved response times, expedited emergency communications, and enhanced mutual aid operations for the JIFD units. The funding for this agreement is included in JIA's Fiscal Year 2024 proposed budget.

A motion to recommend approving and renewing the Dispatching Services Agreement with the Joint Public Safety Communications Department was made by Mr. Willard and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, introduced members from Innisfree Hotels based in Gulf Breeze, Florida. After hearing that Innisfree Hotels was interested in purchasing Hampton Inn and Suites on Jekyll Island, JIA staff met with the company's leadership team including the founder, Julian MacQueen, CEO and president, Ted Ent, and CFO, Brooks Moore. Moore and Ent were present at the Board meeting. Ent provided the Board with background on Innisfree Hotels which was founded in 1985 with the vision of creating a company that allowed employees to be the same person at work as they are at home. The company began as a motel company, but MacQueen saw an opportunity to focus on beachfront properties or properties with immediate beach access that are also family oriented. Innisfree considers itself a triple bottom line company, focusing on people, planet, and prosperity. The company is also committed to reducing their carbon footprint, and through implementing a sustainability department, they emphasize conservation, which is vital for a beach community. Jekyll Island will be the tenth east coast property operated by Innisfree. They currently have properties in Amelia Island, Surfside, South Carolina, Hutchinson Island, and Cocoa Beach.

Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager, presented the assignment of the Hampton Inn & Suites from the current lessee Peachtree Hotel Group to Innisfree Holdings, LLC. Humphrey

confirmed that a background check had been completed, and staff recommends approval of the assignment.

A motion to recommend approving the assignment of all rights under the Lease from PHVIF II Jekyll Island, LLC, the current lessee of Hampton Inn & Suites, to HAMJI Hospitality, LLC, was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented an amendment to the Summer Waves Management Agreement with SCS Resort Management, LLC (SCS). Steve Sharpe is the principal for SCS and has managed Summer Waves successfully since 2007, and he has performed beyond the expected standard of operation. The proposed amendment raises the base management fee from: \$7,277 to \$7,834 per month, adds an automatic renewal period of one year following expiration of the regular term, and adds a right of termination for convenience in favor of SCS (during the renewal term only). All other terms of the agreement would remain the same.

A motion to recommend approving the amended Management Agreement with SCS Resort Management, LLC., increasing the monthly base management fee to \$7,834 was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the First Amendment to the lease with Tortuga Jack's, LLC (Tortuga's). The 2015 lease containing the legal description of the premises refers to an "Exhibit A", which was inadvertently omitted from the executed copy and neither the landlord (JIA) nor tenant (Tortuga's) have been able to locate it. Additionally, the square footage referenced in the lease of 6,000 square feet does not accurately reflect the actual area of the premises proposed in the original Request for Proposal or the area currently utilized by Tenant.

The proposed amendment will insert a new Exhibit "A" in the lease showing the premise according to a survey prepared by Shupe Surveying. This survey captures the approximate 18,405 square feet of area used by the tenant. Additionally, the First Amendment clarifies the parties' respective maintenance obligations regarding specific elements of the building.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, provided background information, reminding the Board that the JIA previously operated the restaurant, but through an RFP the current lessee was selected. He noted that the lease has been problematic from the beginning, resulting in three in-house counsels and the Attorney General's office weighing in on the interpretation of current lease language. Hooks and Harris hope that the proposed amendment will resolve the ambiguity in the lease and decrease the amount of staff time spent on the lease.

A motion to recommend approving the first amendment to the lease with Tortuga Jack's LLC was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- F. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director presented a Memorandum of Agreement with The Cottages at Jekyll Island Homeowners Association, Inc. (The Cottages) for consideration. The Cottages have begun rebuilding their crossovers and during that process they asked if the JIA would be willing to cost share on a crossover to be built at Tallu Fish Lane. This crossover would serve The Cottages, Jekyll Island residents, and Jekyll Island guests. The total project cost is \$32,200, and it is proposed that the JIA pay 50% of that cost through approval of the presented MOA.

A motion to recommend approving the MOA with The Cottages and allocating \$16,100 to construct the Tallu Fish crossover from the FY23 capital budget was made by Mr. Willard and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- G. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented an update on the Amphitheater Market Assessment that was created by the DLR Group of Cleveland, Ohio. He reminded the Board that DLR Group was chosen through the RFP process and the assessment was to take place in two phases: first a feasibility study and secondly a design phase, if reactivation was determined feasible in the first phase.

Hooks provided history on the amphitheater, explaining that, according to a 1972 Atlanta Constitution article, the amphitheater was built following an agreement over State appropriations within the Georgia General Assembly. After the amphitheater was built, performances were held there and enjoyed by guests. However, mosquitos and unfavorable weather tended to lessen the experience.

Hooks provided examples of active and passive amphitheaters. An active amphitheater would be the St. Augustine that focuses on frequent productions. A more passive amphitheater would be the one in Albany, Georgia, which is smaller allowing for more personal events and not constantly activated. The DLR Group's assessment includes potential benefits and impacts of a reactivated amphitheater on Jekyll. A benefit would be an opportunity to provide an after-hours activity or experience for guests. However, the location of the site (proximity to residents) and capacity and parking restraints need to be considered. Throughout the assessment a vision of a lower scale amphitheater seems to appear with a focus on guests who are already staying on Jekyll, opposed to operating a venue to attract more people to the Island.

Hooks recommended not moving to a second phase of the project at this time until more research and assessment can be completed by staff to create a more comprehensive outlook.

Mr. Willard asked how the project would be funded, and Hooks anticipated it would be the responsibility of the JIA. Mr. Krueger asked about the kind of programs or events that could be held at an outdoor amphitheater that couldn't be held in the current Convention Center. Hooks explained that live music opportunities would be an attraction. He also noted that the assessment considers a reactivated amphitheater could be operated by the current convention center management group and would offer an alternative venue to groups visiting Jekyll.

- H. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the Operations Update highlighting several project updates:
- Campground bathhouse construction continues. One in the existing campground is completely functional and utilized by campers. The interior structures are complete for the second bathhouse, and they are finishing up the electrical and plumbing. The third is under construction. Once the second and third bathhouses are complete, an existing bathroom will be demolished to build a fourth bathhouse. All four bathhouses will be identical in design.
 - The Public Safety Facility project is underway. Footings have been dug allowing vertical construction to begin in the next couple of weeks. Submittals for doors and hardware continue to be approved. Additionally, Georgia State Patrol has acquired the funding to construct their canopy for patrol car parking.

- The causeway bike path to the Guest Information Center (GIC) is underway. The path will be split between asphalt and concrete to ensure a smooth transition from the existing incomplete bike path to the path extension to the GIC.
 - The airport terminal project will be delayed. The received bids for the project were grossly over budget which would leave the JIA responsible for any costs over \$717,000. POND will redraw the building design to lower construction costs, and GDOT Intermodal agreed to allow JIA to receive the previously allotted funds in fiscal year 2025. Jensen emphasized that this project is only paused, and it will continue in fiscal year 2025.
- I. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director’s report which included the following highlights:
- Sites are being considered for food trucks to operate on Jekyll Island. Historically, food trucks were only allowed during festivals, but with the continuing issue of lack of eating capacity on Jekyll Island, this is being considered as a solution. The two potential locations are Ocean View Beach Park and Great Dunes Beach Park. The food truck operators would be licensed with the JIA, restricted to just the designated locations, and required to serve meals opposed to snack foods or just sweets.
 - The JIA Finance Committee Budget Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.
- J. For the sake of time, Chairman Atkins refrained from providing comments.

There was one public comment:

- Al Tate, Jekyll Island resident, spoke on the Jekyll Island Amphitheater, supporting the use of the amphitheater site in an educational capacity.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting
May 23, 2023

The Board Meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m., and all members were present in-person except for Commissioner Williams and Mr. Joyner who were absent.

Action Items

1. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the April 18, 2023 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Willard. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve up to \$285,790.40 from current year funds to be used for purchasing specific FF&E needed for the Mercer Medical Clinic on Jekyll Island carried by unanimous approval.
3. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the updated Pay Plan Policy carried by unanimous approval.
4. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the updated Performance Management Policy carried by unanimous approval.
5. The recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to approve the updated Conduct and Performance Policy carried by unanimous approval.
6. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the fifth amendment to the qualified management agreement for the Jekyll Island Convention Center carried by unanimous approval.

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7. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve and renew the Dispatching Services Agreement with the Joint Public Safety Communications Department carried by unanimous approval.
8. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the assignment of all rights under the Lease from PHVIF II Jekyll Island, LLC, the current lessee of Hampton Inn & Suites, to HAMJI Hospitality, LLC carried by unanimous approval.
9. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the amended Management Agreement with SCS Resort Management, LLC., increasing the monthly base management fee to \$7,834 carried by unanimous approval.
10. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the first amendment to the lease with Tortuga Jack's LLC carried by unanimous approval.
11. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the MOA with The Cottages and allocate \$16,100 to construct the Tallu Fish crossover from the FY23 capital budget carried by unanimous approval.

A motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel was made at 11:16 a.m. by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried by unanimous approval. Mr. Willard was not present during the executive session.

A motion to adjourn executive session was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks. The motion carried by unanimous approval, and executive session adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Dr. Evans made a motion to offer the position of Executive Director of the Jekyll Island Authority to Mark Williams. This offer includes base compensation of \$250,000 with a performance incentive up to \$25,000, a vehicle allowance of up to \$10,000 annually, inclusion of standard Jekyll Island Benefits, and allowance of the transfer of accrued leave from current state employment. Employment will commence on July 1, 2023 with a three-year employment agreement. Mr. Krueger seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous approval.

The motion to adjourn the Board Meeting was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.