

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

August 15, 2023 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board of Directors met in Public Session Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and via teleconference.

Members Present: Mr. Dale Atkins, Chairman
Mr. Bob Krueger, Vice Chairman
Mr. Bill Gross, Secretary/Treasurer
Dr. Buster Evans
Mr. Glen Willard
Ruel Joyner
Interim Commissioner Walter Rabon

Members Absent: Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks
Mr. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr.

Key Staff Present: Mark Williams, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Zachary Harris, General Counsel
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Communications & Marketing
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

Chairman Dale Atkins, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. All members were present in-person, except for Mr. Wilkinson and Ms. Burch-Meeks, who were both absent.

JIA received two online public comments for this meeting:

- Cathy Dillon – Various Concerns for New Executive Director
- Jon Stevenson – Fireworks

JIA Board Member Appointments Update & Announcements

1. Chairman Atkins welcomed and introduced Mr. Walter Rabon, Interim Commissioner of DNR. The Commissioner of DNR serves as an ex-officio member of the Board.
2. Chairman Atkins announced that Governor Kemp reappointed Mr. Glen Willard and himself to continue serving on the JIA Board, with the expiration term of July 1, 2027. Mark Williams, Executive Director, congratulated Mr. Atkins for also being reappointed as Chair of the JIA Board for another one-year term.
3. Chairman Atkins appointed Mr. Rabon to the following committees: Historic Preservation/Conservation, Finance, Legislative, and Committee of the Whole. All other committee assignments remained the same as the previous year.

I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

Bob Krueger, Chair

- A. Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources, presented a department report. He highlighted the following items:

- Through the Jekyll Island Foundation, Historic Resources was recently awarded a grant of \$10,000 to apply toward preservation work needed on the exterior of Indian Mound Cottage.
- Historic Resources has developed an updated Internal Operations Plan. This is the first update to the plan since 2002.
- Conservation work on Faith Chapel’s Tiffany Window is complete, and re-installation is slated for the second week of September. A rededication program is in the planning stage.
- Work on the outdoor classroom at Mosaic continues and nears completion. This space will be used for youth activities, adult programs, lectures, and other educational presentations.
- Revenues for Historic Resources in Fiscal Year 2023 exceeded revenues for all previous fiscal years. Additionally, Historic Resources exceeded projected revenues for fourteen consecutive months.
- Additional programming with Living History costumed interpreters has been created to offer guests unique and engaging experiences.
- In the fall, Historic Resources will offer a millionaire motor car experience to guests. Guests can take a tour in a Model-T replica that runs on a golf cart chassis.

There were no public comments.

II. Finance Committee

Bill Gross, Chair

- 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 both months.

June

- Revenues were \$4,787,955.
- Expenses were \$3,836,965.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$950,991.
- Total Traffic Counts were 146,974 vehicles.
- Year-to-date hotel revenues totaled \$37 million.

July

- Revenues were \$7,468,627.
- Expenses were \$3,765,231.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$3,703,396.
- Total Traffic Counts were 164,173 vehicles.
- Year-to-date hotel revenues totaled \$46.2 million.

- B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, provided additional details for the year-end financials.

- The largest variances from the budgeted revenue were seen from business leases, which were \$653,000 better than budget, hotel tax revenues which were \$1.5 million better than budget, and the Convention Center which was \$1.4 million better than budget.

- The largest variance in expenses for fiscal year 2023 was personnel expenses, which were \$1 million less than budget.
- Net income for the fiscal year was \$8,413,821, which was \$6.9 million better than budgeted. From these revenues:
 - The JIA Board approved \$5 million in capital equipment and projects.
 - \$175,000 was allocated towards the purchase of a ladder truck.
 - \$312,000 was contributed to the Water/Wastewater Fund.
 - \$1.15 million was contributed to the Tourism Fund.
 - \$569,000 was contributed to the Public Area Improvement Fund.
 - \$100,000 was carried forward for the ecological design portion of the Golf Improvement Plan.
 - \$1.1 million will be contributed to JIA’s Cash Reserve Fund.

C. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, presented several capital equipment and projects requests for consideration. The request included \$275,000 from the Water/Wastewater Fund for improvements at the water/wastewater treatment plant. Additionally, \$205,500 from the Public Improvement Fund was requested for landscaping equipment and electronic billboards at the end of the Jekyll Island Causeway.

A motion to recommend approving the Capital Equipment and Projects Requests as recommended by staff, was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

III. Human Resources Committee

Buster Evans, Chair

A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, presented a Fiscal Year 2023 Staffing Level Update. The JIA has an average roster of 284 full-time and part-time employees. During FY23, 109 employees left. This was a 5% decrease from the previous year. 86 employees left voluntarily and 23 involuntarily. Of the 86 employees who left voluntarily, 49 were part-time employees while 37 were full-time. The reasons for those who left voluntarily were as follows:

- 35% - Opportunity
- 27% - Personal
- 9% - Relocation
- 12% - Availability
- 10% - Abandoned Job
- 7% - Retirement

J. Johnson also discussed the turnover trends JIA has seen since FY14 which has fluctuated through the years. Turnover numbers spiked in FY21 following the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have since dropped and seem to be stabilizing.

Lastly, J. Johnson shared the year-to-year headcount comparisons for full-time and part-time employees. She explained that filling part-time positions is becoming

increasingly difficult, noting that previously, part-time positions were often filled by people who had retired, but these retirees are now choosing to not continue working. With that gap in the workforce, it's challenging to find part-time employees who can work certain hours during the day. Moving forward, some positions may need to be reevaluated to ensure departments are staffed appropriately.

There were no public comments.

IV. Marketing Committee

Joy Burch-Meeks, Chair

A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing & Communications, presented a department report which included a summary of media highlights and accolades.

- *Atlanta Magazine* highlighted Jekyll Island in their “Georgia’s Enchanted Islands” feature.
- *Garden & Gun* published a story on Cinco, the sea turtle who returns to Jekyll Island every year for nesting season.
- *Daily Beast* highlighted Jekyll’s conservation efforts and its uniqueness.
- Two issues of *31•81, The Magazine of Jekyll Island* have been nominated as finalists in the 2023 Folio: Eddie and Ozzie Awards.
- Jekyll Island was ranked Favorite Beach Town in Southeast United States through *Traze Travel* which is a traveler-based recognition.
- Holly Jolly Jekyll received the 2023 Event of Year Award through the Southeast Tourism Society. Additionally, Jekyll’s Shrimp & Grits Festival was also recognized as a 2023 Signature Event.

There were no public comments.

V. Legislative Committee

Glen Willard, Chair

No Report

VI. Committee of the Whole

Dale Atkins, Chair

A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications presented Request for Proposal (RFP) #378 for Public Relations Agency Services. The purpose of the RFP is to identify a new and appropriate public relations agency to support the strategic national and regional media relations and public relations priorities of Jekyll Island which includes:

- Telling the story of Jekyll Island and the JIA’s mission, goals, strategies, initiatives, successes, and opportunities to media across the country and internationally.
- Ensuring strong awareness, understanding, and support of our work with the public.
- Building engagement, trust, and advocacy through strategic communications.
- Enhancing the credibility of the organization and its operational facilities.
- Identifying industry trends to help shape internal and external messaging.

The selected agency will be responsible for overseeing a comprehensive national media and public relations plan that adheres to JIA’s communication strategies. This includes a plan that cohesively represents Jekyll Island, the Jekyll Island Authority, its amenity facilities, and business partners on the island. The RFP will be released on August 15, 2023, and respondents will have until September 20, 2023, to submit responsive proposals.

Hawkins also noted that public relation services are currently budgeted, and JIA presently has a public relations agency. However, this RFP will provide the opportunity to explore other agencies that may be a better fit for Jekyll Island.

A motion to recommend issuing and releasing RFP #378 for Public Relations Agency Services as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the Buccaneer Property Schematic Design for consideration. In April 2023, the JIA Board approved the Concept Phase drawings of a planned development to be built by LNWA Developers LLC and Retreat Hotels and Resorts, LLC on the 6.892-acre parcel consisting of 25 single-family homes, additional guest parking, and a community pool. The concept was revised in response to Design Review Group (DRG) feedback which reduced density, improved circulation, provided safer routing for emergency response, and recognized the future turtle lighting challenges to be resolved.

At the August 1, 2023, DRG meeting, the Schematic Design drawings passed review with minor comments, such as clarification of turning radii for emergency vehicles and clarification of maximum residential height measurements that would have to be further addressed during the Site Staking and Design Development phases of the project.

Dave Curtis, a representative for LNWA Developers LLC, was present and highlighted that smaller homes that are designed to be about 2000 square feet and 1.5 to 2 stories tall will be on the ocean side of the development and homes designed to be 2.5 to 3 stories tall will be built behind those. Additionally, the houses are designed to take advantage of natural light and breezes with the purpose of increased sustainability.

The next step in the process is the Design Development phase which will allow the Board to see the site plan, grading plan, landscape plan, tree protection plan, exterior elevations, HOA documents, and life expectancy letter.

A motion to recommend approving the Schematic Design for the Buccaneer property as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented an Operations update, highlighting the following:
- Summer Waves’s revenue for 2023 was over \$3 million. The Man-O-War slide has spread density across the park, improving the guest experience. The additional cabanas are proving to be popular and consistently reserved by families.

- The 2023 revenues for the Campground were approximately \$13,000 higher than fiscal year 2022. Additionally, occupancy at the Campground reached 93% and 94% during June and July. Jensen attributed this high occupancy rate to the Campground staff and the new software that assists with streamlining the reservation process.
- Revenues for the Golf Course increased during fiscal year 2023. However, the maintenance expenditure leaves a very slim profit margin, if any.
- The third of four bathhouses at the Campground has been constructed.
- The design phase of the Campground Store is close to completion, and the 12-acre expansion is expected to be completed by Spring of 2024.
- Concrete has been poured for the Public Safety Complex, and construction will go vertical within the next week, dependent on weather. Completion is still expected for August 2024.

D. Mark Williams, Executive Director presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic Plan for consideration. This year's Plan is a continuation of the FY 2023 Strategic Plan which highlights the need for capacity management to continue the economic and environmental balance of Jekyll Island. Major projects included in the strategic plan are the Public Safety Complex, Golf Improvement Plan, and Campground Expansion.

A motion to recommend approving the Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic plan as presented by staff was made by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Mark Williams, Executive Director, presented his report. He congratulated Mr. Atkins and Mr. Willard on their Board reappointments and welcomed Interim Commissioner Rabon. He thanked the JIA staff for their assistance and patience during the transition into his new role. Williams also provided an overview of a few ongoing items.

- Meetings have begun with Jekyll Island hoteliers and will continue.
- Williams was invited to present an update on JIA operations to the St. Simons Island Rotary Club. Many additional presentations to local groups as well as Convention Center groups are scheduled for later in the year.
- The golf course design team, Jeffrey Stein and Brian Ross, have continued visiting Jekyll's golf courses and are committed to understanding the historical elements of golf on Jekyll.

F. Dale Atkins provided the Chairman's comments. He thanked Mr. Williams and the rest of the JIA staff for their tremendous efforts. He also thanked Georgia State Patrol's Colonel Chris Black for his presence during the Board meeting.

There were no public comments.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Annual Board Meeting
August 15, 2023

The Annual Board Meeting was called to order, and all members were present in-person, except for Ms. Burch-Meeks and Mr. Wilkinson, who were both absent.

Action Items

1. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2023 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gross. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the July 7, 2023 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Evans. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the July 14, 2023 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gross. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
4. Mr. Krueger 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, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Mr. Gross seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
5. Mr. Joyner 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.
6. Dr. Evans 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.
7. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the proposed Capital Requests as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
8. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to issue RFP #378 for Public Relations Agency Services carried by unanimous approval.
9. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Schematic Design for the Buccaneer Property carried by unanimous approval.
10. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the FY 2024 Strategic Plan carried by unanimous approval.

The motion to adjourn the Board Meeting was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Joyner. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.