

## JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

March 19, 2024 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board of Directors met in Public Session Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 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. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr. (Via Teleconference)  
Mr. Glen Willard (Via Teleconference)

Key Staff Present:                Mark Williams, Executive Director  
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director  
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer  
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources  
Zachary Harris, General Counsel  
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Communications & Marketing  
Brad Ballard, Senior Director of Amenities

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

Chairman Dale Atkins, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. All members were present in-person or via teleconference, except for Mr. Ruel Joyner, Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks, and Commissioner Walter Rabon, who were absent.

JIA received one online public comment for this meeting:

- Caroline Tye – Constructive Criticism

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

Bob Krueger, Chair

No Report

### **II. Finance Committee**

Bill Gross, Chair

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

- Revenues were \$2,584,866.
- Expenses were \$2,879,260.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$294,394.
- Total Traffic Counts were 106,044 vehicles.
- Calendar year-to-date hotel revenues totaled approximately \$4 million.

Mr. Gross provided additional details for the monthly financials.

- The largest variances from the budget revenue were seen from the Interest Income, which was \$82,000 more than budget, the Convention Center revenue, which was \$160,000 more than budget, and Golf revenues, which was \$69,000 more than budget.
- The largest variances in expenses for February were the Human Resources expenses, which were \$78,000 less than budget, due to vacant full-time and part-time positions. Also included were the Insurance Expenses, which were \$219,000 more than budget, due to receiving the January invoice in February.
- The Net Operating Cash Loss for February is \$294,394, which is \$46,000 better than the budgeted net operating Cash Loss of \$341,000.
- The Year-to-date Net Operating Cash Income reflects a \$3.5M favorable budget variance and a favorable \$853,000 variance from Prior year to date Income.
- The total traffic count for February was 106,044 vehicles, which was 1,803 less vehicles than February 2023. Mr. Gross noted that the visitation to Jekyll Island was impacted due to rain. Year to date traffic count is 204,021 vehicles, which is 12,748 less cars than last year.
- The February 2024 hotel revenues reported was \$4 million, which is \$575,000 less than the February 2023 revenue. The occupancy rate was 61.2%, which is down from 67.8% in February 2023. Revenue per available room was \$104.73, which is down from \$123.84 in February 2023. The average daily rate was \$171.05, which was down slightly from \$182.56 February 2023.

B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, presented the capital request for the Installation of Fire and Security Systems in the Infirmary Building for \$37,000.

Mr. Kreuger made a motion to recommend approving the Capital Project Request totaling \$37,000 for Installation of Fire and Security Systems in the Infirmary Building as recommended by staff and Dr. Evans seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Buster Evans, Chair

No Report

### **IV. Marketing Committee**

Joy Burch-Meeks, Chair

A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications, presented an update from the Marketing Department.

- Garden and Gun highlighted Jekyll Island as one of seven islands in the feature “Seven Southern Barrier Islands Where We Wouldn’t Mind Getting Stranded On.”
- The spring issue of 31-81 will be sent out in May of 2024. She highlighted the cover featuring a purple passionflower as well as a feature specific to the JIA Conservation Department.
- The North American Travel Journalists Awards honored the Marketing Department

with the Gold Award for the cover design for the 2023 fall and winter issue of 31·81. Mrs. Hawkins highlighted that the honorable mention in this category was National Geographic, and she recognized Brian Lee, former Digital Content Manager for the JIA, as the photographer for this shot.

- Turtle Crawl: The annual race will take place April 27, 2024. Over 800 participants have registered, which exceeds more than 150 participants registered at this time last year. The total participant count for the 2023 race was around 1,600. The race route has changed this year, ending the race at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. She noted that this is the second largest race in the Golden Isles, second to the bridge run.
- The new Causeway digital billboard screens, funded as an approved capital expense in August of 2023, are now installed.

There was one public comment.

- Karen Gleason, resident, spoke on preparing for emergencies on the island, especially wildfires. She mentioned that there are several fire roads that have overgrown on the north end of the island that need maintenance. She requested the JIA actively engage the residents to help protect the island against natural disasters.

Mark Williams, Executive Director, responded to say that we are in the middle of the prescribed fire season and that the JIA will send out Nixle alerts for the residents to be informed of this. He also urged the residents to go onto the Jekyll Island website to review the Firewise program for safety tips.

## **V. Legislative Committee**

Glen Willard, Chair

No Report

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

- A. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the Verizon Cell Tower, 206 Stable Road, Second Amendment for Equipment Addition. This amendment is to document the exchange or the addition of additional equipment. With this amendment, T-Mobile would co-locate on the tower, exchange the equipment on the tower, and install a small supporting equipment box within the lease perimeter.

Dr. Evans made a motion to recommend approving the Verizon Cell Tower, 206 Stable Road, Second Amendment for Equipment Addition and Mr. Kreuger seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the Tortuga Jacks Lease Amendment. He explained that this is a proposed second amendment to a business lease entered in with Tortuga Jacks, LLC in 2015. The tenant is requesting to expand the restaurant outdoor seating patio and will require additional square feet of unimproved land to remain within the total allowable hardscape coverage under the JIA Code of Ordinances for pervious vs impervious cover. The tenant has offered to undertake additional maintenance responsibilities, detailed in the lease, in return for the expanded area. Upon execution, a new Exhibit A will be added to the second amendment for approximately 24,636 square ft,

including the existing, improved square footage. This is pending legal review.

Mr. Gross made a motion to recommend Tortuga Jacks Lease Amendment and Mr. Kreuger seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the Tortuga Jacks Deck Expansion Design. In November of 2023, drawings by landscape architect, Jeff Homans, were submitted to the Design Review Group. The new design includes cosmetic improvements on the east side, an expanded patio area, and relocation of the band stage. The Design Review Group approved the Deck Expansion Design in March 2024.

Mr. Kreuger made a motion to recommend approval of Tortuga Jacks Deck Expansion and Mr. Gross seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented an Operations update.

- The Public Safety Complex: He highlighted that the JIA Facilities Department, Water/Wastewater Department, and Roads and Grounds Department assisted with connecting the new building to utilities, saving the JIA almost six figures in costs through value engineering.
- Golf Course Improvements: Controlled burns and under brushing are taking place with the help of the JIA Conservation Department and Jekyll Island Fire Department. Additionally, Golf Course Architect, Clyde Johnston, added a new bunker to Pine Lakes hole number six (6).
- Public Works Administration Building: This building will include new offices for Landscape, Park Services, Facilities, and Landscape Planning and Design as well as a break room, a training room, and two restrooms. He noted that this building includes recycled red iron that was originally used as the cart barn at the Great Dunes Golf Course, saving the JIA almost \$100,000.
- Summer Waves Parking Lot Improvements: The pervious grid and stone is complete, creating 123 new parking spots on the left-hand side of the Summer Waves Parking lot. The entire entrance, roundabout, and left-hand side will be repaved this year. The right-hand side will be assessed next year. New parking lot lighting is also being installed for the consideration of new evening park hours at Summer Waves.
- Great Dunes Golf Course Construction: RFP 380 for construction of the Great Dunes Golf Course will be posted in the coming week. He noted that the Golf Course Architects for this project are handling the Administration of the project. He explained that there will not be substantial changes to this course, only a restoration. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, and Andrea Marroquin, Museum Curator, met with the Walter Travis Society Board regarding the design. The Board highlighted that this will be one of three Walter Travis Courses that the public can still play, and the only one with ocean views.

- E. Mark Williams, Executive Director, presented his report highlighting the following:

- He thanked the staff for working hard to make budget for this month.
- The Rotary Club will be hosting a Memorial Day event at the Skeet House as the first event to be held in this building.
- The Faith Chapel, Tiffany Window restoration reveal will take place on Good

Friday, March 29, 2024. He thanked the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island for their funding and volunteer work to make this happen.

- Mark Williams, Executive Director, and Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications, attended the Jekyll Island Citizens Association meeting and presented the Historic Shoppes Renovation plan on Pier Road. They also had the honor of meeting the new Jekyll Island Citizens Association President, Joanne Kinsey.
- Mark Williams, Executive Director, attended the Senate Budget Hearing in Atlanta, Georgia. He noted that the budget is moving forward and is currently under negotiation. In the January 2024 Board Meeting, Mark Williams, Executive Director, announced that Yank Moore, Director Conservation, submitted a grant for the conservation phase of the Golf Improvement Plan and was awarded \$1.6M. Today, he announced that the JIA did make the slate. Board Member, Commissioner Walter Rabon, could not attend today's meeting as he serves as Chairman of the Trustees for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act Organization and was presenting the slate to the Senate Budget Committee. He thanked the Rotary Club for installing a bike repair station at Great Dunes Park. The Rotary Club and the Lions Club have partnered to host a public island-wide clean-up day on April 15, 2024, beginning at 10:00 am and ending at 12:00 pm at the Great Dunes Park. The Jekyll Island Greenhouse will be hosting their annual Spring Plant Sale on April 13, 2024.

F. For the sake of time, Chairman Atkins chose to forgo his comments.

There were no public comments.

### **The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting**

**March 19, 2024**

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:16 a.m., and all members were present in-person or via teleconference, except for Mr. Ruel Joyner, Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks, and Commissioner Walter Rabon, who were absent.

#### **Action Items**

1. Mr. Kreuger moved to accept the minutes of the February 20, 2024, Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gross. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Verizon Cell Tower, 206 Stable Road, Second Amendment for Equipment Addition as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
3. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Tortuga Jacks Lease Amendment as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
4. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Tortuga Jacks Deck Expansion Design as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
5. Dr. Evans moved to accept the amendment to the agenda to include the proposed Capital Request as item #5, which was erroneously omitted from the full Board portion of the

agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krueger. There was no discussion, and the amendment was unanimously approved.

6. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the proposed Capital Requests as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.

The motion to adjourn the Board Meeting was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. There was no objection to the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.