

Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Jasper Board Room, Savannah International Trade & Convention Center

Members present: Baxter, Center, Cook, Cutter, Jackson, Marinelli, Polote, Quattlebaum, Sanders, Smith and Tollison. **Members absent:** McAlister. **Also present:** Counsel Tom Gray, Linda Cramer (Chatham County), Kevin Duvall (GWCCA), Lou Phelps (SBJ), Mary Mayle (SMN), Nick Helmholdt, Jeff Hewitt, Mark Adams (GWCCA), Howard Morrison, Pat Rossiter (Tybee Island Maritime Academy), Capt. Nick Farley, and SITCC staff Ronnie Hickman, Judy Johnson, Fredia Brady, Stephen Hall, Jamie Parks, Chef Kasey Thexton and Gail Terrell.

Chairman Smith convened the meeting at 11:02am.

Chairman Smith noted a quorum, and asked for approval of January 2015 Minutes and Treasurer's report. Motion Mr. Center; second Mr. Jackson, approved by voice vote.

Mr. Smith opened the meeting with the presentation by Mr. Howard Morrison and Mr. Pat Rossiter, of ship model *USS Texas (BB-35)*, a New York class battleship loaned by the Tybee Island Maritime Academy.

Regional F&B Director, Jamie Parks, introduced recently hired Executive Chef, Kasey Thexton from SMG-Savor, Wichita, KS.

Mr. Smith asked for the financial reports. Mr. Hall reported an unfavorable variance to the Center budget for January, and a favorable variance to budget for year-end. Mr. Hall reported an unfavorable month and an unfavorable year-end projection for Water Transportation. Mr. Hall then reported an unfavorable Authority performance for January; and a forecasted favorable year-end, noting favorable hotel/motel taxes year to date.

Mr. Smith asked for Counsel's Report. Mr. Gray responded no report at this time.

Mr. Smith asked for the Sales and Marketing Report. Ms. Brady noted 10 definite bookings for January, including multiple year bookings for the International Association of Emergency Management and the Georgia Junior Beta Club. Ms. Brady reviewed the year over year booking (Pace) report and event statistics. Mr. Marinelli commented on an upcoming meeting with Visit Savannah, Trade Center staff and four of the larger Savannah hotels to discuss GA Association Bookings. Ms. Brady reviewed a ten-month assessment of the sales and marketing efforts for the first year of GWCCA management. A detailed analysis was included in the board packets.

To Mr. Center's question on the progress of the lottery machine, Mr. Hall replied that the machine was generating money and a future marketing agreement will create fees for advertising.

To Mr. Smith's question of any existing GWCCA accounts which typically rotate through Atlanta and Charlotte that Savannah may be able to leverage business, Ms. Brady replied that staff will join GWCCA Sales team next week in Atlanta for Sales meetings with corporate groups that typically do not meet in Savannah. Ms. Brady commented that the goal is to eventually have new business leads in the corporate area. Ms. Brady also stated that a new Lead Generation program will be created in the near future in conjunction with Mr. Mark Adams, GWCCA Director of Sales. To Mr. Smith's question of the feasibility to build a group of customers that rotate through GWCC and Savannah, Ms. Brady replied that the Trade Center and GWCC are two different facilities and products; therefore, the focus in GWCC Sales meetings

is to mention Savannah and staff reciprocates the same to Atlanta. Mr. Marinelli and Mr. Smith asked for Mr. Adams' perspective on the Sales and Marketing efforts during the past year. Mr. Adams commented on an increase in strategic sales calls, identifying specific business, introduction to Fortune 500 companies and 3rd party referrals to corporate business.

Mr. Smith asked for the Food and Beverage Report. Mr. Parks reviewed SAVOR Savannah's January financial statement and SAVOR's favorable customer feedback from November and December.

Mr. Smith asked for the Operations Report. Mr. Hickman noted Capital Program updates, including Ballroom door-frame, generator upgrades, Exhibit hall B rollup door and the positive reception given the new River Concourse HVLS fans. To Mr. Center's question regarding solar panels for the Trade Center building, Mr. Hickman replied that a solar drain back system was reviewed in the past which would allow hot water to be generated and used as a heat source for the air handlers. To Mr. Center's question regarding the status of AT&T's interest to install an antenna on Trade Center property, Mr. Hickman and Mr. Hall replied that staff asked AT&T to install a multi-carrier antenna instead of a single-carrier antenna with no reply to date.

Mr. Smith then asked Mr. Duvall for the GWCCA Report. Mr. Duvall commented on attending Visit Savannah's recent board meeting. Mr. Duvall commented on the recent release of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) with regards to the proposed convention hotel development on the Atlanta campus. To Mr. Smith's question with regards to the mission of the RFQ, Mr. Duvall replied that the RFQ will determine if a developer market for a potential 800+ room hotel exists for the Atlanta (GWCC) campus. To Mr. Center's question regarding any impact the RFQ may have in Savannah, Mr. Duvall replied that an established process and lessons learned would be shared with the Savannah team and board members.

Mr. Smith asked for the General Manager's Report. In Mr. Coffey's absence, Mr. Hall commented on the start of the budget process.

Mr. Smith commented on the receipt of the draft PKF study; however, the study has technical errors and also does not include the return on equity calculations. Mr. Smith stated that the consultant has been asked to fix the factual errors, prepare an executive summary and to provide the study to the board members in final form. Mr. Smith commented that the draft PKF study was shared with the Westin/Starwood due to a scheduled meeting later that day. Mr. Smith scheduled a special breakfast board meeting on Thursday March 5, 2015 at 8:30am for the consultant to review the PKF Study in detail.

To Mr. Center's questions regarding the Authority's position on a potential gambling facility on Hutchinson Island, Mr. Smith replied that GIMTCA has no position at this time. Ms. Phelps directed the board's attention to an article regarding a potential horse racing facility, not a casino, on Hutchinson Island on Savannah Business Journal's Facebook page.

Mr. Smith requested any further business; hearing none, Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:48am.

Respectfully submitted,


George Jackson, Secretary