

# Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Thursday, October 10, 2013

Jasper Boardroom, Savannah International Trade & Convention Center

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**Members present:** Baxter, Cutter, Jackson, Marinelli, Quattlebaum and Smith. **Members absent:** Bazzard, Center, Green, McAlister, Monsees, Polote. **Also present:** GIMTCA Counsel Tom Gray, Michael Owens, Marty Johnston, Mark Spadoni, Jeff Hewitt, Dr. Ted Moore, Mr. Howard Morrison and SITCC staff Bob Coffey, Ronnie Hickman, Fredia Brady, Stephen Hall, Jamie Parks and Gail Terrell.

Chairman Smith convened the meeting at 11:03am.

Mr. Smith introduced Dr. Ted Moore, Professor Emeritus – University of South Carolina. Dr. Moore reviewed and presented the Gateway to the World Project to the board. Dr. Moore reviewed the purpose, proposed scope, resource needs and benefits of commercial maritime in the Port of Savannah.

Mr. Coffey stated he would prepare an agreement between GIMTCA and Dr. Moore for the project.

Mr. Smith noted a quorum, and asked for approval of September 2013 Minutes and Treasurer's report; moved by Mr. Marinelli; seconded by Mr. Jackson and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Smith asked for the September 2013 financial reports; Mr. Hall reported a favorable variance to the Center budget for the month, and forecasted year-end to be on budget. Mr. Hall reported that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the fiscal year to be unusually favorable from the impact of unbudgeted events, such as Gulfstream and the State of the Ports events. Mr. Hall commented on three large events in June 2014-- Gulfstream, Landstar and Georgia Municipal Association. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Hall if the budget projections have been revised for year end due to the unbudgeted events in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to which Mr. Hall replied that the revisions are reflected in the financials being reviewed. Mr. Hall reported that the Water Transportation shows an unfavorable variance for September; year-end projected to also be unfavorable. Mr. Hall reported that the Authority shows a favorable variance for September and favorable year-end. Mr. Hall reported favorable hotel/motel tax reports.

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 reported 28 bookings in September, including 11 definites. Ms. Brady also highlighted the definite bookings of Gulfstream – Student Leadership Program and Landstar System Holdings. Ms. Brady also commented on several 2014 tentative bookings for Gulfstream and ScanSource. Ms. Brady also reviewed the year-over-year production and market segment reports. Mr. Smith confirmed that current-year room nights are ahead by 12k compared to last year, which Ms. Brady affirmed. Ms. Brady commented that short-term bookings are much stronger for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to which Mr. Spadoni agreed. Mr. Coffey commented that bookings for short term corporate business was slow in the last quarter of last year; but is increasing in pace. Ms. Brady reviewed the Convention Rental Credit Program Report, about which Mr. Coffey stated that the \$200k rental credit limit for several future years is nearly maxed. Mr. Smith requested modifications to the report to include revisions to the numbers for groups with large quantity of room nights and an additional column for hotel/motel tax estimations next to the rent credit entry in order to determine the net cost. Mr. Hall commented that an average room rate will be needed to which Mr. Marinelli stated that an average room rate can be determined by season. Mr. Smith recognized the collaborative effort of the Sales report by Ms. Brady, Mr. Marinelli, Visit Savannah and the hoteliers.

Mr. Smith asked for the Food and Beverage Report. Mr. Parks reviewed Savor...Savannah's Customer Feedback Report for August, which had a 33% return rate, and a perfect score of 4.00. Mr. Parks commented that Savannah's overall Customer Feedback report has a 60% return rate. Mr. Parks highlighted the upcoming annual Ranger Ball with 1,400 attendees expected.

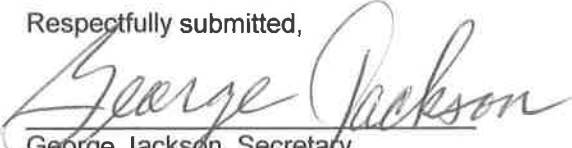
Mr. Smith asked for the Operations Report. Mr. Hickman highlighted the overall improvements to the public restrooms and the sinkhole situation which was caused by a failed storm drain vault in the Main Lot. Mr. Hickman stated that an engineer's inspection of the entire lot determined four similar areas of concern. Mr. Coffey discussed in detail the infrastructure issues on International Drive and the Main Lot. Mr. Hickman reviewed the capital project updates such as the Ballroom Lighting Control System Upgrade and the Secondary Chillwater Pump Variable Frequency Drive Replacement.

Mr. Smith asked for the General Manager's Report. Mr. Coffey reviewed a letter of gratitude from Ocean Exchange. Mr. Coffey also reviewed a summary of the Insurance Coverage purchased by GIMTCA enclosed in the board packets. Mr. Smith questioned if the General and Umbrella liability for both SMG and GIMTCA would cover a car accident scenario which involved alcohol consumption which Mr. Coffey affirmed. Mr. Coffey also commented on the success of the inaugural Savannah Harbor Conference Center event with high-end chocolatier Lindt Sprungli as the client. Mr. Smith asked about the progress of the corridor project between Westin and Trade Center to which Mr. Coffey replied that the construction has begun such as the installation of the translucent wall panels, drop ceiling, fans and the floors painted a brighter color. Mr. Coffey commented that carpet installation will be decided at a later date and construction to be completed in mid-November. Mr. Spadoni commented on 6 tentative new bookings for the Savannah Harbor Conference Center. Mr. Smith asked if the 6 bookings were available prior to the Harbor Conference Center concept to which Mr. Spadoni replied that the bookings are the 1<sup>st</sup> under one contract, venue and service philosophy. Mr. Spadoni further commented that the Westin is selling the Harbor Conference Center as part of the hotel space and menu thereby clients view the option as hassle free when directed to the Convention Center.

Mr. Smith then commented on the GIMTCA-SMG Management Agreement. Mr. Smith stated the board has received SMG's proposal and the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) has indicated intent to submit a proposal before the end of October. Mr. Smith stated that the Executive Committee will meet after receipt of GWCC's proposal, and that a process for decision will be offered at the November board meeting. Mr. Smith commented that the Authority will benefit either way from the proposal process.

Mr. Smith requested any further business: and hearing none adjourned the meeting at 11:53am.

Respectfully submitted,

  
George Jackson, Secretary