



News from the Board Room

Dear Public Partners,

The Park Board of Trustees for the City of Galveston met Tuesday, June 27 at 1:30 P.M. These updates highlight community and administrative updates as well as key decisions made during the board meeting.

Park Board Honors John's Beach Service for 82 Years as a Concessionaire on Stewart Beach

During its meeting, the Park Board honored a concessionaire that has been a dedicated partner at Galveston's beaches for more than eight decades. The trustees recognized John's Beach Service with an award for its exemplary service, acknowledging in-person honorees Max, Walter, and Matthew Wilson of Galveston. John's Beach Service began serving Stewart Beach Park in 1941 when the land from the Stewart Family was gifted to the City of Galveston. Since then, generations of the Wilson family have operated an umbrella and chair rental concession for beachgoers. For more than 80 years, John's Beach Service has delivered excellent service, high quality equipment, and shown resilience in the face of challenging economic and weather-related conditions, General Manager of Parks Vince Lorefice said.

Park Board Recognizes Bob Jordison for Lifesaving Attention to Colleague

The Park Board recognized a crew leader on its Coastal Zone Management staff who recently offered lifesaving attention to a colleague. Bob Jordison, who joined the Park Board in June 2022 and was recently promoted to the position of West End Crew Leader for Coastal Zone Management, was acknowledged and commended for his exceptional leadership during a critical incident that took place April 29. On this date, Jordison promptly responded when a member of his crew showed signs of physical distress. Thanks to his intervention, the employee received immediate medical attention and has since returned to work. Jordison's colleagues speak highly of his positive influence, work ethic, and ability to motivate the team.

Park Board Upholds Competitive Wage Standards

The Park Board approved an allocation of 7% salary contingency for the upcoming 2023-2024 fiscal year budget. This allocation includes merit margins of approximately 4%, with the remaining funds being dedicated to potential market adjustments. The budget estimations were made based on the wage research conducted and presented by Human Resources Manager Susan Keeble. To promote fair compensation, the Park Board approved implementing a living wage of \$17 per hour, ensuring that nearly 40 employees, who are currently earning below this threshold, will earn above it.

Park Board Approves Budget Predictions for 2022-24 Fiscal Year

The Park Board approved budget predictions that estimated the value of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) "penny" to be \$3.3 million in the upcoming fiscal year. The "penny" is a term used to describe each percentage point of the 15% HOT charged to hotel and vacation rental overnight guests in Galveston. The City of Galveston will make final determinations and set the penny value next month. Each year, the Park Board, with input from tourism stakeholders, sets the value of the HOT "penny" based on revenue projections. The recommended penny value of \$3.3M for the 2023-2024 fiscal year means that hotel tax in Galveston is expected to generate \$49,500,000. Of this projected revenue, 6% is sent to the State of Texas and 9% of HOT collected returns to Galveston to keep beaches clean, protect beachgoers, market Galveston to potential visitors, and more.

Park Board Approves Streamlined Concessionaire Policy

On Tuesday, the Park Board approved a new concessionaire policy intended to streamline its process for new and existing Park Board Concessionaires. The policy, which will go into effect immediately, will be formally managed by Park Board staff and reduce the approval process to a 10-day timeline. The Park Board, in collaboration with the City of Galveston, administers the concessionaire program for the beach parks it manages including Dellanera RV Park, R.A. Appfel (East Beach) Park, Seawall Urban Park, Stewart Beach Park, and Seawolf Park. The current process for concessionaire permit approval requires multiple operational documents and approval from the Board of Trustees, taking a minimum of 45 to 60 days.

Park Board Staff to Release New Short-Term Rental Registration and Collection Program Next Month

The Park Board is in the final stages of a software update that will improve the way short-term rentals are registered in Galveston. CFO Bryson Frazier said the software update will launch in July during an update he gave Tuesday to the board. During its testing phase, the new program (Rentalscape), has already revealed new data about nearly 5,000 STRs in the City of Galveston, Frazier said. The presentation to the board also highlighted how Rentalscape will help bring each property into compliance with local ordinances, bring more tax revenue to Galveston and encourage fair business for rental owners.

Park Board Approves Purchase of Beach Patrol Trailers Pending City Council Directive

The Park Board of Trustees voted to approve a \$369,000 purchase for temporary trailers for the Galveston Island Beach Patrol pending City Council approval. All Park Board staff procurement activities for temporary housing for Beach Patrol at Stewart Beach were put on hold until further notice as a result of a City Council resolution from April 28, 2023. The City Manager has sought assistance from the Park Board in procuring trailers to provide temporary office space, storage, bathrooms, and other facilities for the Beach Patrol. Park Board staff will await the City Council's directive to proceed with the purchase.



Park Board to Receive 3 Beach Wheelchairs from Texas General Land Office

The board voted to enter into an agreement with the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to formally accept three more beach wheelchairs to Galveston beaches. The wheelchairs will be funded through a grant the GLO received from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to enhance accessibility nationwide.

Park Board Approves Upgrades to East Beach West Gate

After considering a staff proposal, the Park Board voted to approve \$100,000 for upgrades to the West Gate of R.A. Apfel Beach Park, also known as East Beach. The renovations aim to enhance the visual appeal of the East Beach West Gate, making it a standout location for visitors, staff said. The upgrades will also allow for better staffing at an entrance that is easier to access for residents and visitors due to road conditions and flooding concerns.

In addition to the above updates, four trustees sat for their last meeting: Marty Fluke, Dave Jacoby, Spencer Priest, and Jeff Ossenkop. Five new trustees were appointed by City Council on June 22 and will be sworn in next month. These new trustees include: Sara Godwin, Bill Clement, Gerald Wilson, Barry Willy, and Robert Bullwinkel.

For more information on the park board, visit <https://www.galvestonparkboard.org/>

Park Board meetings are typically held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at 601 23rd Street.

