



News from the Board Room

These updates highlight the key decisions and reports from the meeting of the Park Board of Trustees held on July 25, 2023.

Park Board Unanimously Approves 2023-2024 Budget and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

The Park Board voted unanimously to approve the 2023-2024 budget that has been vetted by four of the Park Board committees: Tourism Development Advisory Committee, Parks and Amenities Committee, Finance and Operations Committee, and the Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee. Park Board CFO Bryson Frazier outlined the five sections of the budget, including the introduction, supplemental schedules, consolidated budget, fund budget, and five-year capital improvement plan. Frazier outlined the Park Board's numerous funding sources; 35% of the annual budget is funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax collections, and other notable funding sources include grants, FEMA payments, and beach user fees. The Park Board annual budget funds tourism development, beach parks maintenance, and beach patrol public safety operations. Park Board Project Manager, Sheryl Rozier, presented an overview of the five-year capital improvement plan including grant-funded and FEMA-funded beach improvements and nourishments to multiple Park Board managed parks.

Park Board Selects Winner Partners to Recruit Chief Executive Officer

The Park Board voted to approve the selection of Winner Partners to recruit a Chief Executive Officer to replace the outgoing CEO Kelly de Schaun. Florida-based Winner Partners was selected out of six responses to the Request for Qualifications that was posted in May. "I do think it is important that we conduct a national search," said Park Board Chair Jason Hardcastle, who also expressed his confidence and admiration for the performance of Kimberly Danesi as the CEO in the interim. Winner Partners will manage the procurement and assessment of candidates for the position for a \$66,000 fee with the potential additional cost of \$16,000 for additional advertising and candidate travel expenses.

Park Board Finalizes Committee Assignments

The Park Board voted unanimously on all votes to assign new trustees to their respective Park Board advisory committees. Bob Bullwinkel was appointed Vice Chair of the Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee and as a member of the new Galveston Music Advisory Committee. Gerald Wilson was appointed Chair of the Workforce Development Committee and Bill Clement the Vice Chair. Sara Godwin was appointed Vice Chair of the Parks and Amenities Committee. Trustee members and staff also represent the Park Board in various committees throughout the City of Galveston. Barry Willey was appointed as the Park Board Trustee representative to the Galveston Island Convention Oversight Committee and Park Board Chief Tourism Officer Tony Lyle was appointed to the committee as well to represent staff. Park Board Chair Jason Hardcastle was appointed as the trustee representative to the Galveston Economic Development Partnership Presidents Roundtable and Park Board Vice Chair Kimberly Gaido was appointed to the Moody Gardens Board of Directors.

Park Board of Trustees Plans Joint Meeting with City of Galveston

The Park Board of Trustees plans to meet jointly with the Galveston City Council at 9 a.m. July 31 in room 204 at City Hall. During the Park Board meeting, Chair Jason Hardcastle presented an overview of the planned agenda items for the joint meeting including: Stewart Beach and Beach Patrol facilities, Hotel Occupancy Tax collections and processes, Park Board budget and capital improvement plan review and process, the interlocal agreement between the two entities, plans for beach access ramps west of 61st street for emergency response vehicle access, expectations for the short-term rental reporting call center hotline, and scheduling quarterly joint meetings. Hardcastle and Park Board staff collaborated with Galveston Mayor Craig Brown and city councilman representative to the Park Board, Mike Bouvier, to develop the joint meeting agenda that was posted July 25. “This is not the first time a joint meeting has been held, and we are looking forward to collaborating with the city on a more regular basis in a formal, public setting,” said Kimberly Danesi, interim CEO of the Park Board.

Park Board Supports the Cavalla Historical Foundation

Park Board interim CEO Kimberly Danesi presented with Cavalla Historical Foundation (CHF) CEO Brian Abugel on the long-standing relationship between the two organizations to enhance the attractions at Seawolf Park. The Park Board and the CHF ratified an operational agreement in July 2022 outlining the shared assets and allowing the CHF to invest in the growth of the Naval Museum. As a result, the Galveston Naval Museum has experienced record-breaking attendance so far this year. Abugel outlined the long-term vision for the Naval Museum and presented opportunities to expand tourism to Seawolf Park. The Park Board co-owns the two vessels, USS Cavalla and USS Stewart, docked at the Galveston Naval Museum operated by the CHF at Seawolf Park, a Park Board managed property that includes a popular fishing pier.

Park Board Employees Recognized for Environmental Impact

Interim CEO Kimberly Danesi recognized two Park Board employees who have made significant environmental impacts to the Galveston community. At the Galveston Island Nature and Tourism Council’s summer social, the council recognized Sheryl Rozier, Park Board Project Manager, with the Partnership Award for her significant contributions to Galveston Island and the East End Lagoon. The council also recognized Elizabeth Schneider, Park Board Environmental Coordinator, for her significant impact on the natural environment and beach cleaning innovations with the Nature Service Award. “Their impacts are so profound, and we couldn’t agree more that these ladies are so deserving of these awards,” said Danesi.

In addition to the above updates, interim CEO Kimberly Danesi made several announcements including:

- New trustee orientation is being scheduled, and notifications will be emailed in the coming days.
- The Beach Patrol team performed well at the Gulf Coast Regional Lifeguard Championships and will be moving on to the national competition.
- Several tourism development staff members attended the Destinations International annual conference in Dallas last week where Danesi presented on accessibility at the beach parks in Galveston and how to attract and support travelers living with a disability.
- Galveston’s Own Farmer’s Market annual fundraiser, “Okra Fest,” is Saturday, August 5. For more information, visit <https://www.okrafestgalveston.com/>.

- The American Institute of Architecture's annual Sandcastle Competition is Saturday, August 12 and is the biggest beach event hosted by the Park Board.

For more information and updates, please visit our official website at <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.

