



## Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2025

### Call to Order

Members Present: Lauren Watkins, Chair, Brad Long, Vice Chair, Bill Bowen, George Vancore and Casey Van Rysdam.

Absent: Harold Dockins, Jason Trent

Also Present: Commission Chair Krista Joseph, David Simpkins, SJC School District Liaison

Recreation Staff Present: Ryan Kane, Director, Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director, Carrie Miska, Business Manager, Teddy Meyer, Rec Facilities Manager and Diane Gorski, Project Specialist/Liaison

### Open Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair

Baccari called for nominations for the Chair. Van Rysdam nominated Watkins. There were no other nominations. Approved 5/0.

Watkins called for nominations for the Vice Chair. Van Rysdam nominated Long. There were no other nominations. Approved 5/0.

### Approval of the Minutes

Watkins called for approval of March 12, 2025, meeting minutes and received a motion from Vancore who was seconded by Long. Motion passed 5/0.

### Public Comments

The Chair called for Public Comments for non-agenda items and there were none.

### Reports

**Commissioner Joseph** announced that she had attended the News4Jax 4 Your Neighborhood event at Veteran's Park. She shared her appreciation of the stations' focus on St. Johns County and the coverage given to the residents while highlighting the park. She said that she was proud of the county for coming up with a bond to fund the new regional parks and staff for their hard work. She expressed her excitement with the upcoming regional park projects and shared that there were some unique components such as libraries and splash parks included in some of the new park projects. Van Rysdam stated that he was glad to see the new parks rolling out. He then

asked about future needs being met. Joseph answered that the BCC was aware of the needs and was working to slow growth. She said that the trend is to catch up with infrastructure. She hoped that there would be additional opportunities to develop park space to provide opportunities for kids to be able to find their talent. Long stated that he appreciated the support that Joseph brings to the RAB. Vancore said that he believes that the county does a great job of bringing things online. He expressed his concern over the athletic associations preferential scheduling for competitive sports and the lack of ADA playgrounds within the county. He spoke about the need for all-inclusive playgrounds at every park. A brief discussion relating to ADA playgrounds and accessibility followed.

**Simpkins** provided updates on High School sports throughout the county. The winter soccer State Athletic Champions were 6A - Bartram Trail and 5A - Ponte Vedra Sharks. Elle Bays won Girls Weightlifting at 169 pounds in Traditional and Olympic. Ponte Vedra Girls Competitive Cheer won 1A. Both Boys and Girls Basketball out of Toco Creek made it to the final four. Ponte Vedra Boys Basketball made it to the final four for the 4<sup>th</sup> time. Ponte Vedra Girls and Boys Wrestling each had a wrestler that finished second in the state. He provided an overview of the spring sports season. Vancore asked what the process was for a local organization to gain access to sports facilities at the local high schools. Simpkins explained that each school had a request form posted online and that each school made the determination without involvement from the district or school board.

**Watkins** reminded the group that the Sports Partnership policy will be on the May agenda. She said that she was going to draft a letter of concern relating to the dire need for additional summer camp locations on behalf of the RAB. She said that she plans on meeting with Recreation staff and the School District and School Board to determine requirements and challenges in sharing facilities. She will report back to the RAB with the next steps. Bowen asked for clarification on the summer camp lottery process. Baccari explained the process and the different rates.

## RAB Member Reports

**Van Rysdam** asked that the following items be included in May's partnership policy review: conflict management, space allocation processing criteria, fee policy. He thought it was time to look at the fee schedule and Baccari concurred and the role of the school board. Simpkins stated that he would attend the May meeting to help address some concerns. He asked about the annual report. Staff said they will provide a copy to the RAB. He mentioned the county's strategic plan and asked the department to set up metrics to determine what can be done to improve and be successful. Baccari explained that this was already underway, and departments are working on defining the objectives and the reporting timeline. She stated that the metrics were established by the BCC workshop and the department is in the process of developing the method to be used to meet the objectives. She stated that the department will keep the RAB informed of the process and give them the opportunity to weigh in. She said that staff should be able to present something in June or July.

**Bowen** stated that he had spent the past month visiting parks. He said he couldn't access Beluthatchee as it was closed. He asked about the on-going improvements to Vilano Pier Walk and Baccari replied that the work will be done in mid-June. He asked if the playgrounds next to schools were utilized by schools and Baccari stated that the schools generally use their own space. Bowen stated that the Field of Dreams Baseball complex looked beautiful.

**Long** announced that the SJC Park Foundation is holding a planning session on Saturday morning. He stated that Ross contacted the National Park Association, and they will be in attendance. He said that three members have been added. He said the Foundation is providing some sponsorships and continues to grow in a positive direction. Joseph asked about the Ellwood project and whether it was being considered. Ross said it was on the radar but developing the Foundation Board and policies has been in the forefront.

**Vancore**, the signage for the Field of Dreams name needed to be updated to Field of Dreams Baseball. Baccari confirmed that this would be taken care of. She said that improvements to the park are in the works and will not interfere with the season. Discussion followed.

## FY25 Strategic Dashboard Bi-Annual Update

**Miska** presented the FY25 Strategic Dashboard Bi-Annual Update (attached). Vancore asked how program participants are defined and Baccari clarified that these were the actual number of individuals participating in Parks & Rec sponsored and operated programs only. Van Rysdam asked for additional metrics reflecting the actual percentages during the same time frame for last year and the current year. Discussion followed. Kane confirmed that Van Rysdam was asking for a ratio analysis identifying the same time for YTD FY25 compared to YTD FY24. Bowens asked about the golf course rounds played numbers per year. Kane explained the trend.

## TDT Category 3: Leisure & Recreation Sports Event Grant Policy Review & Approval

**Baccari** provided new criteria for the eligibility of grant funding. She said the new policy included media requirements as requested. She said that a definition for sports tourism has been added. She said that the requirements for post event documentation will be covered next month. Watkins gave the RAB five minutes to scan the document that had been included in the agenda packet to determine whether they had changes or edits they'd like to discuss. Vancore asked about the scoring process and Baccari replied that this will be covered next month. Watkins provided Vancore with an overview of the development of the grant application process over the past 4 years. Conversation continued. A motion to approve the Sports Grant Policies as amended to include the geographic location requirement noting that this is an ever-improving process was made by Long and seconded by Vancore. Approved 5/0.

## Project Updates

**Kane** reviewed how Capital Improvement Projects are created and recommended and the approval process. He stated that most funding for parks projects comes from Park Impact Fees that are collected from all new construction within the county. He explained that some projects are paid using general funds with the BCC's recommendation and approval. He said grants and Tourist Development Tax dollars are other funding sources. Kane explained that the BCC approved a \$100 million bond that will be paid back using impacts fee and some general funds. Kane stated that the department has 33 projects ongoing with a budget of \$139 million. He provided an update on Butler West Boat Ramp, the 4 Regional Parks (Central Sportsplex, Central Community Park, Northeast Community Park, Northwest Regional Park), dredging projects at Butler, Palm Valley, Riverdale and Doug Crane boat ramps, Crescent Beach Park ADA beach walkover and parking lot, DeLeon Shore Park Improvements, Disc Golf at the County Golf Course, Field of Dreams Baseball refurbishment and addition of ADA restrooms, Micklers Beach bathroom expansion, Millcreek Park completion, Mussallem Beach Front Park Phase 3 completed, St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier Master Plan, Off Parking: North Beach, Pacetti Bay Neighborhood Park Phase II, World Commerce Center Outdoor Courts, Rivertown II parking lot expansion, San Sebastian River Park, Solomon Calhoun Park Improvements, Vilano Floating Dock. Kane entertained questions relating to funding and the projects.

## Staff Reports

**Kane** provided an update on the Shore Drive Trail directives given by the BCC at the last meeting. Staff are working with a community advocacy group to create a plan for a design and project that falls within the budget to present to the BCC. Watkins asked how the community advocates were chosen and Kane replied that Commissioner Murphy included the community spokespersons both for and against the project. He reviewed the current school district facilities being used by SJC and the potential locations for future use. There was a brief discussion relating to the use of High School facilities and the public's perception of recreational access. Kane shared that the state approved \$26 million to construct 26 miles of trail, referred to as the Sun Trail. He said the county entered into an agreement with FDOT for Parks and Recreation to maintain the county portion of the Sun Trail once construction. The group discussed the importance of the trail and shared their support.

**Baccari** shared that the March 29<sup>th</sup> movie in the park was a great success. She said that the department continues to add pre-activities to these events that include yard games and face painting. She provided a review of the Kids Got Talent Show on March 30<sup>th</sup> that was sponsored by the SJC Park Foundation who provided the top three winners with gift cards and prizes. She announced that the contract for the St. Johns County Fishing Pier was awarded to Southern Road & Bridge for \$2,388,198 to address damages to pile sections 9-16. She shared that News for your Neighborhood included interviews with Commissioners Joseph and Whitehurst and Foundation Director Marithza Ross at Veteran's Park. She said it was well attended and included interviews with the public. She announced upcoming programming in April: Glow in the Dark Egg Hunt 2025 on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 6-9 p.m. at the Ketterlinus Gym, First-ever St. Johns

County History Harvest on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 4-7 p.m. at Beluthahatchee Park, Annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 17 & 18 from 10 a.m. – noon and the annual Kids' Triathlon on April 27<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m. at the Solomon Calhoun Community Center with the Park Foundation as a major sponsor. She announced that May is National Weather Safety Month, an annual awareness campaign focused on promoting water safety and preventing drowning and water-related injuries. Vancore asked for the events to be advertised and Baccari replied that events posted on social media, the Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources and Beaches Newsletters and the county website. Bowen shared that he noticed the programming activities have greatly expanded over the past couple of years and said that he looked forward to reading the monthly newsletter. Watkins commented on the unique diversity of programs offered.

Vancore made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Bowen. The motion carried 5/0.

# PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC DASHBOARD

FISCAL YEAR 2025  
OCTOBER 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2024

\$1.9m

Revenue

\$275

Sports Marketing  
Grants Awarded

\$8.3m

Expenditures

Facebook

 Followers: 41,020

Instagram

 Followers: 9,383

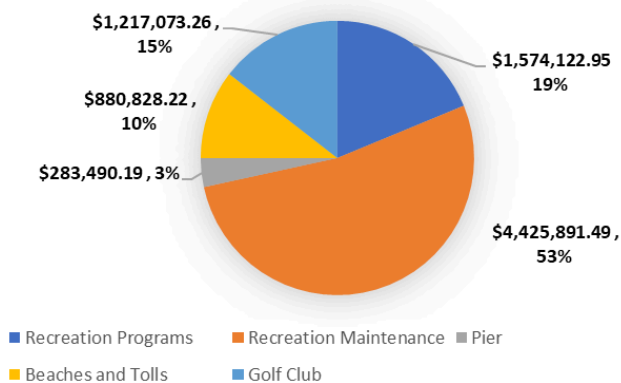
Reach ⓘ

343.3K ↑ 80.7%

Views ⓘ

1.8M

Expenditures



↓ 1,800 Program Participants

↑ 32,000 Rounds of Golf

↓ 6,000 Beach Passes Sold

↓ 41,700 Pier Admissions

↑ 18,500 Field Rentals

\$109m

Capital Projects Budget

33

Number of Projects

| Organizational Development              | Actual FY20   | Actual FY21      | Actual FY22      | Actual FY 23     | Actual FY 24     | Actual FY25       |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| SJC FTE                                 | 90            | 89               | 92               | 98               | 107              | 108               |
| Revenue                                 | 1,636,424.00  | \$ 1,887,036.00  | \$ 4,621,019.00  | \$ 5,578,060.64  | \$ 6,481,753.72  | \$ 1,952,299.01   |
| Expenditures                            | 1,548,132.00  | \$ 1,500,932.00  | \$ 12,633,138.38 | \$ 17,298,822.93 | \$ 19,256,208.74 | \$ 8,381,406.11   |
| <b>Programs &amp; Attendance</b>        |               |                  |                  |                  | \$ -             |                   |
| # Participants in County Programs       | 2,694         | 3,023            | 2,802            | 4,174            | 4,377            | 1,810             |
| Rounds of Golf                          | 56,970        | 62,437           | 13,713           | 59,098           | 65,664           | 32,057            |
| Beach Passes Sold**                     |               | 71,971           | 78,055           | 74,112           | 78,000           | 6,019             |
| Pier Admissions                         | 45,234        | 96,013           | 100,304          | 91,047           | 86,307           | 41,741            |
| # Field Rental Hours/ #of Fields Rented | 40,322        | 60,648           | 143,925          | 38,384           | 36,088           | 18,445            |
| <b>Media &amp; Promotions</b>           |               |                  |                  |                  |                  |                   |
| Total Facebook Followers                | 7,733         | 20,900           | 27,820           | 32,895           | 38,448           | 41,020            |
| Total Instagram Followers               | 2,663         | 5,100            | 5,630            | 6,802            | 8,265            | 9,383             |
| <b>Sports Marketing</b>                 |               |                  |                  | 0                |                  |                   |
| Budget Allocated                        | \$ 189,300.00 | \$ -             | \$ 250,000.00    | \$ 300,000.00    | \$ 300,000.00    | \$ 300,000.00     |
| Number of Requests                      | 13            | 5                |                  | 23               | 25               | 30                |
| Dollar Amount of Requests               |               |                  |                  | \$ 309,000.00    | \$ 400,932.00    | \$ 464,089.00     |
| Requests Approved                       | 13            | 5                | 42               | 23               | 25               | 29                |
| Total Awarded*                          | \$ 112,500.00 | \$ -             | \$ 228,500.00    | \$ 250,000.00    | \$ 299,432.00    | \$ 275,001.00     |
| <b>Capital Projects</b>                 |               |                  |                  |                  |                  |                   |
| Capital Dollars Budgeted                | 8,707,529     | \$ 18,956,326.00 | \$ 41,700,000.00 | \$ 41,000,000.00 | \$ 61,000,000.00 | \$ 139,000,000.00 |
| # of Projects                           | 9             | 10               | 24               | 33               | 46               | 33                |
| <b>Grant Funding</b>                    |               |                  |                  | 0                |                  |                   |
| Grant Dollars Awarded                   | \$ 177,000.00 | \$ 350,000.00    | \$ 1,386,000.00  | \$ 900,000.00    | \$ 4,849,573.00  | \$ -              |

# fields rented - changed metric FY23

\*\*Does not include Tax Collectors office

| Pier Visitation FY24 | Oct  | Nov | Dec  | Jan  | Feb  | Mar  | Apr  | May  | Jun  | Jul  | Aug  | Sep  |      |
|----------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Sightseeing          | 6320 |     | 5326 | 5888 | 5698 | 6552 | 9175 | 6459 | 6390 | 8817 | 6002 | 4875 | 6345 |
| Fishing              | 1013 |     | 780  | 520  | 825  | 692  | 1396 | 1072 | 1341 | 821  | 0    | 0    | 0    |

| Pier Visitation FY25 | Oct  | Nov | Dec  | Jan   | Feb  | Mar  | Apr  | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
|----------------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sightseeing          | 6724 |     | 9122 | 10711 | 6594 | 4422 | 3947 |     |     |     |     |     |
| Fishing              |      |     |      |       | 16   | 63   | 142  |     |     |     |     |     |

| Golf Rounds  | FY21         | FY 22        | FY 23        | FY 24        | FY 25        |  |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Oct          | 4650         | 5086         | Reno         | 5646         | 4563         |  |
| Nov          | 4755         | 4307         | Reno         | 5019         | 5363         |  |
| Dec          | 5060         | 4320         | 5735         | 4834         | 4765         |  |
| Jan          | 5807         | Reno         | 6469         | 5325         | 4613         |  |
| Feb          | 4979         | Reno         | 6107         | 5774         | 5754         |  |
| Mar          | 6314         | Reno         | 7157         | 6774         | 6999         |  |
| Apr          | 6235         | Reno         | 6508         | 6512         |              |  |
| May          | 6177         | Reno         | 6546         | 6,277        |              |  |
| Jun          | 4896         | Reno         | 5056         | 5048         |              |  |
| Jul          | 4340         | Reno         | 5296         | 5152         |              |  |
| Aug          | 4469         | Reno         | 5059         | 4943         |              |  |
| Sep          | 4755         | Reno         | 5165         | 4360         |              |  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>62437</b> | <b>13713</b> | <b>59098</b> | <b>65664</b> | <b>32057</b> |  |

| Field Rentals | FY 24        | \$\$                 |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Oct           | 3837         | \$ 19,424.00         |
| Nov           | 3298         | \$ 11,706.00         |
| Dec           | 2252         | \$ 13,075.00         |
| Jan           | 2255         | \$ 13,454.00         |
| Feb           | 3169         | \$ 11,335.00         |
| Mar           | 3653         | \$ 12,433.00         |
| Apr           | 4047         | \$ 17,221.30         |
| May           | 3395         | \$ 17,442.80         |
| Jun           | 2056         | \$ 26,639.55         |
| Jul           | 1208         | \$ 22,898.06         |
| Aug           | 3149         | \$ 12,540.97         |
| Sep           | 3769         | \$ 14,559.34         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>36088</b> | <b>\$ 192,729.02</b> |

| Field Rentals | FY 25        | \$\$                 |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Oct           | 4266         | \$ 19,467.00         |
| Nov           | 3613         | \$ 17,031.00         |
| Dec           | 747          | \$ 14,807.00         |
| Jan           | 2565         | \$ 25,406.00         |
| Feb           | 3497         | \$ 26,445.00         |
| Mar           | 3757         | \$ 28,005.00         |
| Apr           |              |                      |
| May           |              |                      |
| Jun           |              |                      |
| Jul           |              |                      |
| Aug           |              |                      |
| Sep           |              |                      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>18445</b> | <b>\$ 131,161.00</b> |

| Program Participants | FY24        | FY25        |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Oct                  | 280         | 253         |
| Nov                  | 450         | 251         |
| Dec                  | 294         | 457         |
| Jan                  | 313         | 443         |
| Feb                  | 471         | 191         |
| Mar                  | 723         | 215         |
| Apr                  | 662         |             |
| May                  | 360         |             |
| Jun                  | 162         |             |
| Jul                  | 341         |             |
| Aug                  | 263         |             |
| Sep                  | 58          |             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>4377</b> | <b>1810</b> |

| Organizational Development              | Actual FY20   | Actual FY21      | Actual FY22      | Actual FY 23     | Actual FY 24 YTD | Percentage Change 23 to 24 |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| SJC FTE                                 | 90            | 89               | 92               | 98               | 107              | 9%                         |
| Revenue                                 | 1,636,424.00  | \$ 1,887,036.00  | \$ 4,621,019.00  | \$ 5,578,060.64  | \$ 6,481,753.72  | 16%                        |
| Expenditures                            | 1,548,132.00  | \$ 1,500,932.00  | \$ 12,633,138.38 | \$ 17,298,822.93 | \$ 19,256,208.74 | 11%                        |
| <b>Programs &amp; Attendance</b>        |               |                  |                  |                  | \$ -             |                            |
| # Participants in County Programs       | 2,694         | 3,023            | 2,802            | 4,174            | 4,377            | 5%                         |
| Rounds of Golf                          | 56,970        | 62,437           | 13,713           | 59,098           | 65,664           | 11%                        |
| Beach Passes Sold**                     |               | 71,971           | 78,055           | 74,112           | 78,000           | 5%                         |
| Pier Admissions                         | 45,234        | 96,013           | 100,304          | 91,047           | 86,307           | -5%                        |
| # Field Rental Hours/ #of Fields Rented | 40,322        | 60,648           | 143,925          | 38,384           | 36,088           | -6%                        |
| <b>Media &amp; Promotions</b>           |               |                  |                  |                  |                  |                            |
| Total Facebook Followers                | 7,733         | 20,900           | 27,820           | 32,895           | 38,448           | 17%                        |
| Total Instagram Followers               | 2,663         | 5,100            | 5,630            | 6,802            | 8,265            | 22%                        |
| <b>Sports Marketing</b>                 |               |                  |                  | 0                |                  |                            |
| Budget Allocated                        | \$ 189,300.00 | \$ -             | \$ 250,000.00    | \$ 300,000.00    | \$ 300,000.00    |                            |
| Number of Requests                      | 13            | 5                |                  | 23               | \$ 25            | 9%                         |
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| Requests Approved                       | 13            | 5                | 42               | 23               | \$ 25            | 9%                         |
| Total Awarded*                          | \$ 112,500.00 | \$ -             | \$ 228,500.00    | \$ 250,000.00    | \$ 299,432.00    | 20%                        |
| <b>Capital Projects</b>                 |               |                  |                  |                  |                  |                            |
| Capital Dollars Budgeted                | 8,707,529     | \$ 18,956,326.00 | \$ 41,700,000.00 | \$ 41,000,000.00 | \$ 61,000,000.00 | 49%                        |
| # of Projects                           | 9             | 10               | 24               | 33               | 46               | 39%                        |
| <b>Grant Funding</b>                    |               |                  |                  | 0                |                  |                            |
| Grant Dollars Awarded                   | \$ 177,000.00 | \$ 350,000.00    | \$ 1,386,000.00  | \$ 900,000.00    | \$ 4,849,573.00  | 439%                       |

# fields rented - changed metric FY23

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