

**Media Contact**

Mary Beth Bassett  
Public Relations Director  
Park Board of Trustees  
Office: 409-797-5121  
Email: [mbassett@galvestonparkboard.org](mailto:mbassett@galvestonparkboard.org)



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**Galveston Park Board Update: October 27, 2020**

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees held its regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27 via livestream. Below is an update of news from the boardroom.

- The trustees met two recent Park Board hires, Susan Keeble and Haoming “Emma” Zhang. Keeble will serve as Human Resources Generalist and comes to the organization with a BS degree in Business Administration in Finance from the University of Texas and holds a master’s degree of Management in Human Resources from Carnegie Mellon University. Zhang will serve as a senior accountant. She has a master’s degree in Accounting from Dallas Baptist University and a master’s degree of Science in Finance from the University of Texas.
- The Park Board voted to spend an amount not to exceed \$13,725 for consulting fees related to the implementation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) plan. Calista Smith and Steven Baines from Cincinnati-based Scale Strategic Solutions will spearhead the programming. The plan includes the adaption of activities ranging from the celebration of “Heritage Months” to investments in culturally representative imagery for marketing, to the delivery of cultural sensitivity training to staff and the formation of a DEI task force to measure progress. The consultants will guide the DEI task force to support adoption and track institutional changes.
- Greg Burns from Washington D.C.-based Thorn Run Partners presented a federal legislative overview. Burns works on behalf of the Park Board to provide strategic counsel and to support its initiatives at the federal level. He said the upcoming election and differing national agendas for each political party will be determining factors in what types of funding the Park Board pursues for projects including beach nourishment and federal grants, plus business and coastal related legislation.
- Austin-based Ryan Brannan, principal of the Brannan Firm, presented the state legislative perspective. Traditionally, during the fall months, a delegation from the Park Board visits Austin to take part in annual Unity Dinner and Surge on the Capitol events sponsored by Texas Tourism Alliance and the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association. Another effort is made in support of the Chamber of Commerce which also organizes a “Galveston Day” in Austin or invites key State legislators to the island to expose them to Galveston issues. This year, these events have been made virtual or cancelled, making communication through the Austin representative more critical. Brennan informs and provides strategic counsel to the Park Board and represents its interests at the state level.
- The Park Board approved spending \$12,500 to hire a facilitator to guide the organization’s strategic planning process. Priorities include aligning Board and stakeholder priorities and energizing the management team about institutional aims. Tammy Blount of Washington-based Fired Up! Culture is the professional consultant assigned to the effort. She plans to achieve these goals through a series of facilitated discussions that will review the existing mission, vision, objectives and goals; evaluate current initiatives and recommend appropriate adjustments; develop a team culture and align priorities.

- The Park Board approved the organization's departments' work plans. The Park Board work plans are designed to establish operational goals, set expectations, monitor and evaluate progress toward the goals and help to hold staff, committees and Board members accountable for achieving the goals. The work plans are also used as a basis for employee evaluations. The plans' progress is reported monthly in the Island Times report, quarterly to the Executive Management team, bi-annually to the Board and annually to the Board and stakeholders in the organization's annual report.
- Director of Coastal Strategies Group John Lee presented an outline of roles, responsibilities and actions federal, state and local regulatory agencies can take in times of contingencies. He emphasized the current state of beaches in light of the three consecutive coastal storms that affected Galveston in 2020. He noted that lines marking public and private property have shifted as a result and encouraged proactive communication among the agencies and homeowners to educate them about their roles in debris removal.
- The Park Board approved spending \$45,570.25 for a JMC Wave Boat for Beach Patrol. The rigid inflatable rescue craft is used in tandem with jet skis – once attached to the boat the jet ski becomes the motor. The boat can operate in less than a foot of water, which will be helpful for the many bay emergencies Beach Patrol responds to.

### **About the Park Board of Trustees**

The Park Board of Trustees oversees beach maintenance and tourism development on Galveston Island, including operations for beach cleaning, the Galveston Island Beach Patrol and the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. For more information on the Park Board of Trustees, please visit [www.galvestonparkboard.org](http://www.galvestonparkboard.org).