



**May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 @ 9AM**

**Golden Isles Development Authority (GIDA) Board Room**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

BILL DAWSON  
DAREN PIETSCH  
WALTER RAFOLSKI  
GREER ANDERSON  
RICHARD NIXON

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

**OTHERS PRESENT**

RYAN MOORE, STAFF  
SHERRI PRUITT, STAFF  
MCKENZIE PADGETT, STAFF  
JOAN HEARN, STAFF  
REES SUMERFORD, COUNSEL  
ROB BURR, GCAC  
TERRA WINSLETT, GCAC  
SHAWNA WILLIAMS, GCAC  
KIM COLLIER, SAINT SIMONS ISLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
JOHN PANEL, SAINT SIMONS ISLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
FRANK O'BRIEN, SAINT SIMONS ISLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
AUBRI BROWN, CSX RAILROAD  
SARAH BROWN, CSX RAILROAD  
REGINA McDUFFIE, CITY OF BRUNSWICK  
PAUL CHRISTIAN, ROBERTS CIVIL ENGINEERING  
PAM SHEIRLING, THE ISLANDER

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bill Dawson called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Darren Pietsch gave an invocation and Chairman Bill Dawson led Pledge of Allegiance.

### **ACCEPT AGENDA**

Chairman Bill Dawson amended the agenda to include the Saint Simons Christian Academy Bond Resolution under Chairman Items.

**A MOTION** was made by Walter Rafolski, seconded by Greer Anderson, and passed unanimously to accept the amended agenda as presented. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

### **WELCOME & RECOGNIZE GUESTS**

Chairman Bill Dawson welcomed guests.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Bill Dawson invited public comments.

### **CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS**

- **Board Member Advertisement Update**

Chairman Bill Dawson reported that the advertisement period closed on May 1, 2026, with an additional allowance for mailed applications to arrive until May 15, 2026. He has appointed Daren Pietsch and Greer Anderson to serve on the interview committee.

Once all applicants have been interviewed, the committee will present their recommendations to the board for consideration.

- **Presentation of CSX Select Site**

Aubri Brown and Sarah Brown formally presented the CSX Select Site award to the GIDA board. The presentation featured photographs with Chairman Bill Dawson, marking the recognition as a notable milestone for the authority.

- **Saint Simons Island Bond Resolution**

**A MOTION** was made by Walter Rafolski and seconded by Daren Pietsch to approve Saint Simons Island bond resolution as presented, subject to legal review. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**A MOTION** was made by Richard Nixon and seconded by Daren Pietsch to approve April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Minutes as presented. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

### **FINANCIALS**

#### ***Approve February Financials***

Joan Hearn reported that March places the organization three-quarters of the way through the fiscal year on budget, with wetland surveys and Share the Future grant funds fully distributed.

A **MOTION** was made by Greer Anderson and seconded by Walter Rafolski to approve March 2026 financials as presented. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Consideration of Georgia Break Bulk Bridge Permitting***

Ryan Moore reported on the Georgia break-bulk bridge permitting, noting the need for a crossing where the creek divides the north and south tracks. The engineering package would be for \$64,000 covering permitting and design.

A **MOTION** was made by Richard Nixon and seconded by Walter Rafolski to approve the engineering package for \$64,000 for permitting and design as presented, subject to legal review. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

## **UPDATES**

### **PRESIDENT'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

#### **NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTION**

##### ***World Trade Center (WTC) Global Business Forum***

Ryan Moore reported that both he and Daren Pietsch attended the WTC Global Business Forum on behalf of both the Authority and WTC Savannah. According to Pietsch, the forum provided a clearer understanding of tariff impacts on U.S. businesses, offering valuable context for regional economic development work. He also noted that there was a large delegation from the coastal region in attendance, emphasizing strong local engagement in global trade issues.

##### ***GEDA Spring Workshop***

Ryan Moore reported that the Authority attended the GEDA Spring Workshop, which was held in Savannah this year. Sherri Pruitt also participated on behalf of the Southeast Georgia Alliance, adding regional representation to the event. The event focused on featured panel discussions including international site visits, building trust in communities, and workforce development

##### ***GITC Dinner***

McKenzie Padgett reported that the Authority co-hosted a dinner with the Georgia Ports Authority as part of the Georgia International Trade Conference, Chairman Bill Dawson was also in attendance. The event was well received and served as a strong networking opportunity, bringing several key corporate decision-makers to the table and helping strengthen relationships valuable to ongoing economic development efforts.

##### ***Area Development Conference***

McKenzie Padgett will be attending the Area Development Conference next month in New Orleans, with additional updates to be provided as details develop.

### ***Prosperity Through Trade Luncheon***

Sherry Pruitt reported that the Authority will share a table with the Southeast Georgia Alliance (SEGA) for the upcoming seventh annual International Business of the Year Award at the Savannah World Trade Center event. Daren Pietsch will be attending in his roles with the Authority, Savannah WTC, and SEGA, ensuring strong regional representation. More to come.

## **EXISTING INDUSTRIES**

### ***Amazon Ribbon Cutting***

McKenzie Padgett reported that the Authority held a ribbon-cutting for the new Amazon facility, an event that drew a strong community presence. Following the ceremony, attendees were given a tour of the facility, offering a firsthand look at the operation and its impact on the region.

### ***Willies Weenie Wagon Share the Future Video***

Sherry Pruitt shared the Share the Future video with the group, highlighting Willie's Weenie Wagon, which recently received a grant to update the exterior façade of its facility. The video showcased the business as an example of successful local investment and community-focused improvement.

## **WORKFORCE**

### ***GICCA Signing Day***

McKenzie Padgett reported that GICCA is hosting its Signing Day event at this very moment for recent graduates. Although the Authority could not attend due to the conflict with today's meeting, the Authority hired a photographer to ensure the event was documented and supported.

## **MARKETING**

### ***Marketing Update***

McKenzie Padgett presented an overview of the monthly activity summary for the Board and attendees, noting that March activity levels remained steady. She also highlighted the top-performing post of the month, emphasizing continued engagement across the Authority's outreach and communications efforts.

### ***Business Attraction Campaign***

McKenzie Padgett reported that the Business Attraction Campaign launched in March and will continue through the end of May. The campaign consists of six ads, forming a coordinated effort to increase visibility and generate new project interest.

***Georgia Logistics Summit***

McKenzie Padgett reported that the Authority team participated in the Georgia Logistics Summit event with updates on Georgia's economic development and the economic impact of logistics.

***Lucas Center Ecosystem Panel***

McKenzie Padgett reported that she served as a panelist for the Lucas Center Ecosystem, an initiative focused on expanding opportunities for economic empowerment. The Lucas Center supports entrepreneurs, business owners, nonprofit leaders, and students, helping strengthen the regional ecosystem for innovation and community advancement.

***United Community Bank (UCB) Jr Board Presentation***

Sherri Pruitt reported that she was one of several speakers participating in Greer Anderson's UCB Jr. Board presentation. Greer hosted the event and invited representatives from the Authority, Topsy McSway's, Grace Graffiti, and the Downtown Development Authority to speak about the importance of community involvement and supporting local growth. The session emphasized how engaged entrepreneurs and businesses contribute to a stronger, more vibrant community.

**GCAC**

***Capital Budget Amendment #2526-04***

Shawna Williams reported on the capital budget amendment #2526-04. The amendment adjusts the capital program to encumber necessary costs to complete the ARFF facility construction project and special engineering services for a contract tower.

A **MOTION** was made by Walter Rafolski and seconded by Daren Pietsch to approve the adjustments to designated accounts to adjust the capitals budgets as follows: Adjust the Capital expenditures not the exceed \$227,638. Additionally, authorize the Executive Director to execute the budget amendment, associated Change Orders, and all necessary documentation upon final approval by the Development Authority, as present and subject to legal review. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

***Davis Love III Foundation, Inc. – RSM Classic Golf Tournament – SSI Airport***

Terra Winslett reported the Davis Love Foundation request a land use agreement for approximately 11.7 acres at the SSI Airport for the annual RSM Classic Golf Tournament.

A **MOTION** was made by Richard Nixon and seconded by Greer Anderson to approve the Davis Love Foundation land use agreement as presented, subject to legal review by the FAA and GDOT. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

Informational Items reported by Rob Burr:

- The fire station ceremony topping off ceremony was well attended and completion date of fire station expected by the end of the year.
- Infrastructure for the future hangars construction and the SSI Airport are well underway with five businesses ready to develop. Updates to follow.
- The Honor Flight event, held in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the United States, will be scheduled for June 13th this year.
- The Woody Woodside terminal dedication is scheduled tentatively for June 22 with details to follow

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

- GIDA Board Meeting – Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, at 9am at 209 Gloucester Street, Suite 211, Brunswick, GA 31520

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Closed Session - Real Estate OCGA Section §50-14-3(b)(1)(B)

Closed Session – Pending or Potential Litigation OCGA Section §50-14-2

Personnel OCGA Section §50-14-2 (b)(2)

A **MOTION** was made by Daren Pietsch and seconded by Greer Anderson to enter into Closed Session to discuss Real Estate, Pending or Potential Litigation, Personnel. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

A **MOTION** was made by Walter Rafolski and seconded Greer Anderson to return to Open Session. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

## **Returned to Open Session**

A **MOTION** was made by Walter Rafolski and seconded by Richard Nixon to approve the Richland Rum purchase and sell agreement as presented and subject to legal review. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

A **MOTION** was made by Greer Anderson and seconded by Walter Rafolski to approve moving two million in funds for the purchase of Richland Rum, as presented and subject to legal review. The **MOTION** carried unanimously: 5-0.

The strategic planning will be held on May 19th and the specific location will be announced once arrangements are finalized.

**ADJOURN**

A MOTION to adjourn was made by Walter Rafolski and seconded by Greer Anderson. The MOTION carried unanimously: 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.

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*Chairman Bill Dawson*

*Attest:*

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*Sherri Pruitt*

*Director of BR&E / Golden Isles Development Authority*