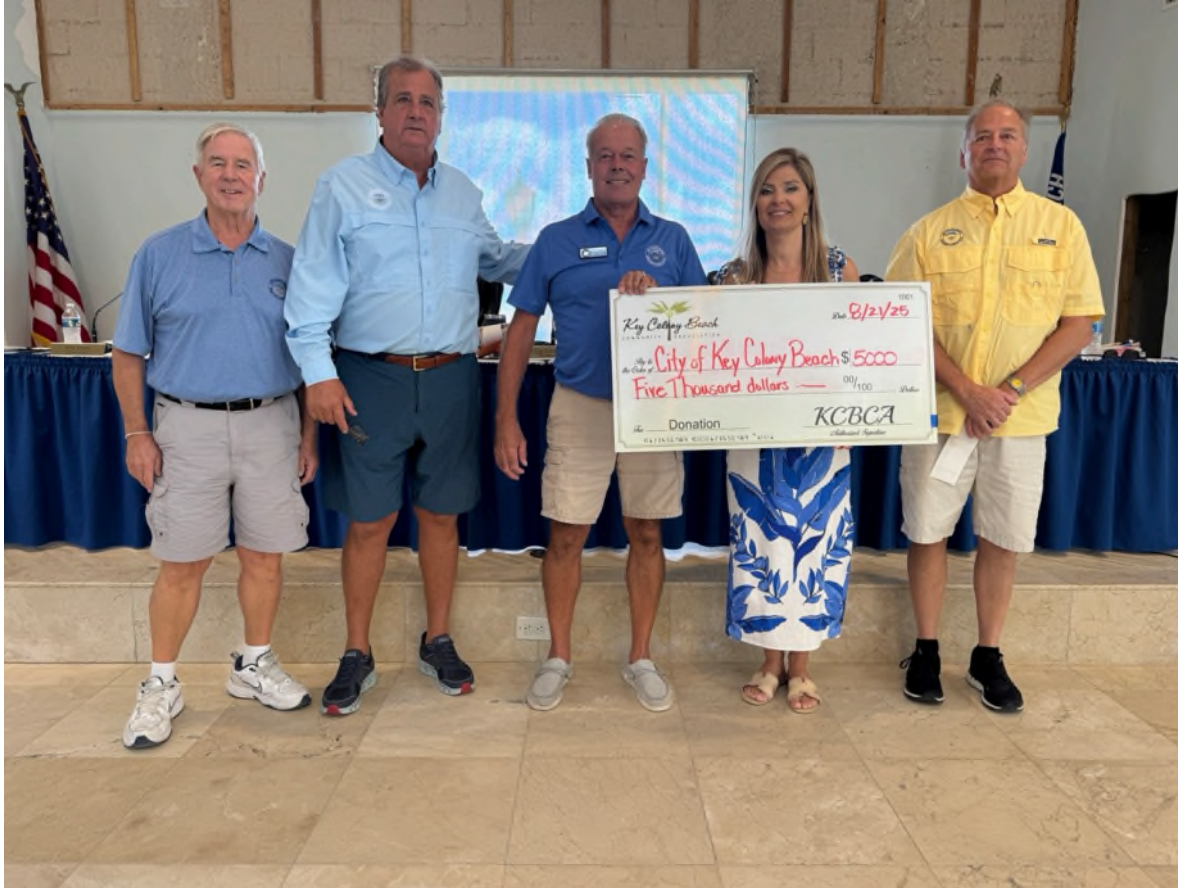


KEYSWEEKLY

KEY COLONY BEACH WEIGHS FISHING AT SUNSET PARK

By **Alex Rickert** - September 5, 2025



A \$5,000 donation from the Key Colony Beach Community Association will fund appliance replacement in the soon-to-be-remodeled Marble Hall kitchen. ALEX RICKERT/Keys Weekly

With a design approval and preliminary cost for its upcoming City Hall remodel behind them, the Key Colony Beach City Commission moved through a lengthy session of grant

updates, contracts, billing and budget items on Aug. 21, headlined by a discussion of allowing fishing in the city's Sunset Park.



Mayor Freddie Foster, attending the meeting virtually, told the commission the city has received a \$19,000 Tourist Development Council grant for improvements to the Sunset Park pier, to include running water and a filet station that would allow fishing and cleanup at the end of the pier.

Communication before the meeting from some residents expressed concern with the mess of bait and fishing equipment on the pier, echoed to the board by Secretary/Treasurer Tom Harding.

"(Key Colony Beach) was founded on fishing," Foster responded. He said daily monitoring and cleanup of the area would be managed by the city's public works and police departments. A potential extension of the pier, meanwhile, may allow for segregated areas for fishing and sightseeing.

"I can tell you that there's no better joy than watching the parents and the grandparents take their children and fish," he said. "I think it's worth giving them the shot. ... If it becomes unwieldy, we can always undo it."

Signs to be refreshed and installed will clarify that fishing is only allowed in designated areas, while jumping off the pier and swimming and snorkeling at the park remain prohibited. Wading in the park's shallow waters is allowed, a provision multiple commissioners said could become a blurred line in the future.

The changes to park use were unanimously approved as a portion of ordinance 2025-503, which also contained changes to the powers of the city's Recreation Committee – particularly relevant as Key Colony reworks its city golf course management. Under the amended code, the Recreation Committee may "observe and make reports to the city commission regarding recreational activities" in the city, but may not directly supervise self-funded groups or other entities that have entered into contractual agreements with the commission.



The Key Colony Beach City Commission recognizes Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni, center, for 20 years of service in its Aug. 21 session.
ALEX RICKERT/Keys Weekly

In other news:

- A \$24,000 purchase of a used 2021 F-150 Responder truck, which Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni told the commission included roughly \$17,000 in specialty equipment already installed, was unanimously approved.
- Ordinance 2025-500, approved in a 3-2 vote, will bring changes to sewage disposal rates effective Oct. 1, 2025. Residential units, apartments and condominiums will pay \$222 per quarter, while commercial units will pay \$2.47 per 100 gallons of water consumed or \$75 per month per unit, whichever is greater. Proposed changes to add charges for washing machines, additional bathrooms and additional facilities with sinks in apartments and condos were removed before approval, in accordance with a recommendation by the city's utility board. Harding, who had recommended the changes with additional costs, voted against the proposal, along with Foster. The ordinance will be read again in September.
- Changes to wastewater billing for the city's marina slips will be re-examined later this fall, after the commission voted 3-2 to wait for further data collection on wastewater use before amending fees.
- Following a significant increase to \$259.29 per hour charged by Monroe County for fleet maintenance and repair services, an agreement between KCB and the county for these services was removed from the agenda.
- Resolution 2025-07, unanimously approved, extends KCB's agreement with the city of Marathon for fire and emergency medical services. The price paid by Key Colony increased drastically in recent years, from \$550,000 in 2022 to a scheduled \$1,157,000 in 2026. The changes, Harding said, came as Marathon officials felt KCB was being undercharged for services rendered in relation to Marathon as a whole. The price hike accounted for roughly 70% of Key Colony Beach's projected tax increase this year, Harding told the commission. "If we have two more increases, I think it's about time that we could probably do it (ourselves) at a lower cost," he said.

ALEX RICKERT

Alex Rickert made the perfectly natural career progression from dolphin trainer to newspaper editor in 2021 after freelancing for Keys Weekly while working full time at Dolphin Research

Center. A resident of Marathon since 2015, he fell in love with the Florida Keys community by helping multiple organizations and friends rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Irma. An avid runner, actor, and spearfisherman, he spends as much of his time outside of work on or under the sea having civil disagreements with sharks.

