

BREAKING: KEY COLONY BEACH MAYOR PATTI TREFRY RESIGNS

By Alex Rickert - October 11, 2023



In a surprising move that will undoubtedly add another layer to the city's already tumultuous year, Key Colony Beach Mayor Patti Trefry submitted her letter of resignation to City Administrator Dave Turner on Oct. 11, effective at 12:01 a.m. that same day.

Citing a need to be closer to her two-year-old grandson in North Carolina during a "priceless" time in his life, Trefry wrote that she "made a decision based on what is best for our family."

"While I know this is a difficult time, I have complete confidence in my fellow commissioners, current and future," she added. "I leave our community in good hands. "I will always be grateful to the citizens of Key Colony Beach and our amazing city staff. I have enjoyed my time here, but look forward to beginning this new chapter in our life."

"I received your resignation with sorrow, you led the city in the right direction during your term as Mayor," Turner wrote in an email reply to Trefry. "I wish you and your family many happy days to come. For me, thank you for being a strong mayor and supporter."

Trefry's resignation comes as Key Colony continues to wade through three ongoing issues: dual investigations from FEMA and an independent city-contracted attorney into allegations of fraud in the wake of Hurricane Irma, an ongoing police unionization process, and the decision to accept an \$8.375 million bid to demolish and rebuild KCB's City Hall. The latter is still embroiled in court proceedings, as a group of citizens dubbed "Concerned in KCB" led by resident Laurie Swanson

have filed petitions to challenge the commission's 3-2 vote and send the City Hall decision to a voter referendum.

Her vacant seat carries incalculable political weight within the city, as the remaining commissioners have thus far voted in a 2-2 split on several critical issues. While Trefry's votes usually aligned with those of Vice Mayor Beth Ramsay-Vickrey and Secretary-Treasurer Tom Harding in a group consistently maligned by Concerned in KCB members as the "group of three," commissioners Joey Raspe and Freddie Foster have been vocal opponents of the city hall decision and a city-sponsored fraud investigation.

Asked directly whether these ongoing issues played a factor in Trefry's resignation, or if she had a message for those who will question her decision in the midst of ongoing turbulence, she issued the following statement in a text to the Weekly:

"The current issues in the city did not affect our family decision or timing in any way. As to the fraud investigations, I was fully supportive of addressing allegations made by former city employees. I also support our police officers' right to unionize. The matter of city hall is in litigation, so I cannot comment, but it absolutely did not factor into our family decision.

With building a home out of state, my husband and I were going to be spending more and more time away from the city. While legally I could remain in office until the sale of our home here was finalized, ethically I believe this was the correct timing. I have complete confidence in my fellow commissioners both current and future."

Per the city's code of ordinances, the remaining commissioners are now charged with appointing another to fill Trefry's seat within 45 days. If they are unable to agree on a replacement with a majority vote, a special election will be called to fill the vacancy.

Ramsay-Vickrey will act as the city's mayor in Trefry's absence, while the newly-appointed commissioner will serve for the remainder of Trefry's current term, set to expire in November 2024. Speaking with the Weekly by phone, Trefry said she had already privately made the decision not to seek

re-election before her resignation.

The appointment process isn't unfamiliar to the commission, which will fill a vacant seat for the third time in the last 18 months. In April 2022, the commission appointed Ramsay-Vickrey following the resignation of former city clerk turned commissioner Kathryn McCullough, a central figure in allegations of fraud levied against KCB earlier this year. Ramsay-Vickrey was then re-elected as the city's top vote-getter in the Nov. 8 general election that same year.

On the same day Ramsay-Vickrey and fellow election winner Foster were sworn in, the newly-seated commission voted to appoint Raspe in the wake of former commissioner Ron Sutton's passing on Oct. 25.

Keys Weekly will update this developing story as more information becomes available.

https://www.keysnews.com/key-colony-beach-mayor-abruptly-resigns/article_ad5a7824-6876-11ee-a839-b78905f27516.html

Key Colony Beach mayor abruptly resigns

By RICHARD TAMBORRINO Special to The Citizen 2 hrs ago
In a surprise development hastened by resident outrage against the Key Colony Beach City Commission, as well as media scrutiny about the myriad investigations into the dealings of the commission, Mayor Patti Trefry abruptly resigned Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 11, effective at midnight.

She submitted a letter to City Administrator Dave Turner that read, in part, that her decision was attributed to wanting to be closer to family. However, the mounting pressures within the tiny municipality regarding the rebuilding of City Hall, a pending FEMA fraud investigation and deep resident unrest hovered over her administration.

"Life is short and none of us are guaranteed tomorrow," Trefrey wrote in her letter to Turner. "This time in our grandson's life is priceless and we want to enjoy every second. ... Therefore, it is with deep regret that I tender my resignation as Mayor/City Commissioner ..."

The City Commission is now left with only four commissioners, who are expected to convene later this month, likely at the regularly scheduled commission meeting on Thursday, Oct. 19. They are expected to encourage interested applicants to apply to fill the open commission seat at that session. The sharply divided commission will now be faced with coming to consensus on Trefry's replacement.

In her letter, Trefrey acknowledged the problems the city faces, as well as the roles of the commissioners.

"While I know this is a difficult time, I have complete confidence in my fellow Commissioners, both current and future," she wrote. "Our community is in capable hands."

Vice Mayor Beth Ramsay Vickery will step in as mayor.

rtamborrino123@gmail.com