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## Mayor's resignation looms over KCB commission

Key Colony Beach ushers in new fiscal year

By RICHARD TAMBORRINO Special to The Citizen

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Just a week after Mayor Patti Trefry abruptly resigned from the Key Colony Beach City Commission, the remaining four commissioners reconvened Thursday, Oct. 19, for the first meeting of the new fiscal year.

Vice Mayor Beth Ramsay Vickery assumes mayoral duties for the duration of Trefry's term, which ends in November 2024. The replacement plan for Trefry's seat on the commission was led by City Attorney Dirk Smits.

He explained that, first and foremost, applicants for the seat would have to be KCB residents as well as registered city voters. The deadline for application submittals is Nov. 9. Then the commission has 45 days to agree on a new commissioner from the submitted applicants. If the commission cannot agree on an applicant, which is possible given the current commission divide, the city then has six months in which to conduct a special election.

Smits also suggested that final candidate interviews be conducted in a public meeting.

The commission dynamics have been altered with Trefry's resignation, as she, along with Commissioner Tom Harding and Ramsay Vickery, had been leveraging their 3-2 majority to largely shape the city's direction for the past year, including

the approval to rebuild City Hall, which remains in limbo pending a judge's ruling regarding a resident petition drive to put the rebuild up for a referendum vote.

The remaining commissioners are expected to seek a candidate that will essentially “break the tie” between the two factions. Given negative sentiment among many residents toward the three-commissioner majority on full display since the petition drive was initiated, if a special election is conducted, it's possible the city hall opposition could gain more traction, according to some observers.



Trefry

The City Hall issue was just one of several that elicited resident outrage, largely directed at Trefry and City Administrator Dave Turner. Media coverage and mounting pressures within the tiny municipality regarding a pending FEMA fraud investigation related to City Hall and the sentiment that resident voices have been ignored hovered over her administration.

Trefry announced her decision to resign in a letter to Turner on Oct. 11, saying she wanted to be closer to family. Her home in KCB is already up for sale, and she has been building a home outside the state for some time.

In a statement regarding Trefry's resignation, Ramsay Vickery said, “Family is the most important thing and time with loved ones is not something to be taken for granted ...so I completely understand Patti and Bill's desire to be closer to their family.”

Overall, the remainder of this commission meeting was conducted swiftly, despite a 30-minute break just 10 minutes into the session so Smits could conduct a closed-door meeting with the commission regarding the status of the pending

litigation against the city by the resident group, Concerned in KCB.

The city approved its fire-EMS services contract with the city of Marathon, although it chose to simply renew the expiring three-year contract for only one additional year, since Marathon had increased the annual cost of services by \$150,000 to \$700,000.

Turner acknowledged the increase notification arrived after the millage was set and that some fiscal year budget cuts would have to be made to make up the difference. The commission approved cuts of \$61,000 to the city park contract, \$51,000 for lobbyist expense and \$40,000 for miscellaneous legal expenses.

Ramsay Vickery indicated the city may have to revisit the legal expense cut since the city code was “antiquated” in her opinion.

Commissioner Joey Raspe added that the fire-EMS increase “was not surprising” and felt additional annual increases would follow. He said the city should get in front of such increases sooner next year so the commission “could budget properly.”

Commissioner Harding reported the city would have a \$477,168 rollover from the 2022-2023 budget, and Turner received approval to hold a town hall meeting for the city’s plans to add fiber optic services throughout KCB, one component of his plans to make KCB a “smart city.”

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