

Summary Minutes of the:
ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS
EMERGENCY SPECIAL CALL VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

Founders Park Community Center
87000 Overseas Highway
Islamorada, FL 33036
March 17, 2020

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Mike Forster called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. Village Clerk Kelly Toth called the roll with the following Councilmembers being present on roll call: Mayor Mike Forster, Vice Mayor Ken Davis, Councilman Jim Mooney, Councilwoman Deb Gillis and Councilman Chris Sante. Also, in attendance were Village Manager Seth Lawless, Village Attorney Roget Bryan, Village Clerk Kelly Toth and other relevant personnel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ken Gentes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION

A. Discussion Regarding Covid-19

1. Village Manager Update Regarding Actions Taken and Measures in Place
2. Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
3. Measures Taken by Other Local Municipalities and Monroe County
4. Group Gatherings, Restaurants and Bars
5. Islamorada Local Beaches
6. Future Council Meetings
7. Future Committee Meetings
8. Additional Topics for Discussion and Direction

Village Manager Seth Lawless stated the Village issued a Declaration of State of Local Emergency on March 16, 2020. Mayor Forster reported that he communicated daily with the Monroe County Mayor; and that he had participated in a conference call with Monroe County and that Monroe County, the City of Key West and the City of Marathon had issued declarations. The Village Manager provided an update on actions taken by the Village in response to covid-19 stating the Village was currently at stage 3-monitoring; Village Hall remained open with the same level of service; the Island Fest and Bay Jam events were cancelled; and that staff was taking the recommended precautions and had limited business travel and meetings. Fire Chief Terry Abel provided a brief explanation of the Incident Command System.

Mayor Mike Forster commented about Governor DeSantis' Executive Order 20-68 issued on March 17, 2020 which required bars and night clubs to close for 30 days and for restaurants to reduce their seating capacity to fifty percent and maintain a 6-foot buffer between tables. He stated that he had received no communications regarding closure of the stretch. Mayor Forster reported that covid-19

testing had occurred in Monroe County and that no one had tested positive; that Islamorada was busy in part due to theme park closures on the mainland; and that hotel occupancy was still around 70 percent.

Councilwoman Deb Gillis commented that the City of Key West opted to close restaurants prohibiting on-site dining and allowing only take-out and delivery; and that it would be difficult to police the 50-percent rule on restaurants. Councilwoman Gillis and Mayor Forster noted that they were not in favor of closing restaurants.

Mayor Mike Forster announced that the City of Marathon would be closing their beaches and parks at sunset and were following through with the Governor's Executive Order. He stated the City of Key West closed Smathers Beach, Mallory Square and the Southernmost Point landmark. Mayor Forster inquired as to the Village Manager's plans for the beaches in Islamorada. The Village Manager stated that he had planned to keep the beaches open unless instructed otherwise. He noted the groups that gathered on the beaches were typically small. Councilwoman Deb Gillis asked if the Village had the authority to break-up groups with more than ten people. The Village Manager stated staff could ask the group to disperse, but that there was no formal authority. Mayor Forster noted that Monroe County was going to post signage asking individuals to keep group gatherings to ten or fewer people. Discussion ensued about posting signage and group gatherings. Councilwoman Gillis and Mayor Forster spoke in favor of posting temporary signage. Councilman Ken Davis noted that groups that clustered in one location typically clustered in other locations such as homes and often had a self-awareness and a familiarity with the people they associated with. He noted, with agreement from Councilman Sante, that when access was denied to one location it forced the individuals to move to another location. Councilman Jim Mooney commented about the many people that were trying to comply with the recommendations and requirements and that he was not in favor of posting signage at the beaches. Councilman Davis spoke in support of allowing the restaurants and bars to self-police and noted the enforcement challenges. Village Manager Seth Lawless stated the Department of Business and Professional Regulations (DBPR) was responsible for enforcement pertaining to bars and restaurants. Councilman Davis noted the economic impacts the closures would have on the restaurant and bar staff.

Mayor Forster asked Monroe County Sheriff's Captain Corey Bryan to provide an update on their protocols. Captain Bryan reported the Sheriff's Office would be limiting arrests; would be issuing notices to appear and citations; keeping the jail population down; and that they have increased cleaning efforts for law enforcement vehicles. He reported that a "Priority 36" code was developed for 911 dispatcher which meant that an individual was contaminated. The information would be relayed to fire and law enforcement so additional precautionary measures could be taken. He stated the Sheriff's Office was working on additional ways to limit contact; and looking at ways to keep officers in reserve. Fire Chief Terry Abel reported on the protocols the Fire/Rescue Department was following. He explained that the 911 dispatcher would transfer calls to the Fire/Rescue duty crew in situation where the medical symptoms of the patient were suspicious. The Paramedic/EMT would interview the individual and a decision would be made as to whether the rescue crew needed to take precautionary measures prior to entry or approaching the patient. He stated for all other medical calls one crew member would approach the patient while the remaining two crew members would wait at the door or retrieve equipment from the vehicle and stated the back of the rescue vehicles was completely isolated from the front of the vehicle. He explained that notification protocols were in place in the event a patient was suspected of having covid-19; that duty crew would notify the hospital and that upon arrival the patient would be placed in one of five isolation rooms at Mariners Hospital. He stated the duty crew would meet with the doctor regarding his

assessment of the patient and that if the doctor believed the patient could have covid-19 the rescue and duty crew would be decontaminated and the duty crew would go home and self-quarantine until such a time as the test results were back for the patient. Councilwoman Deb Gillis commented about how a rescue department in Indiana had to temporarily remove ten responders from work due to exposure to covid-19 on a call. Chief Abel stated that two of the Village's first responders could respond to a call, in part due to the various types of equipment carried on the vehicles and that that 95 percent of the calls could be handled by two first responders. He stated that if it became necessary, staffing levels would be reduced.

Village Manager Seth Lawless asked for Council direction regarding the March 26th Council meeting and upcoming committee meetings. Village Attorney Roget Bryan commented that there was not anything on the agenda that could not be pushed to the April 16th meeting date and noted that Monroe County had cancelled their upcoming meeting. Council gave direction to staff to cancel the March 26th Council meeting and to postpone committee meetings for 30 days.

Councilwoman Gillis confirmed that the beaches would remain open and no signage would be erected and suggested the Village encourage take out and delivery from restaurants.

Mayor Forster opened public comment; seeing none, public comment was closed. He asked that the Council keep the option open for another Special Call meeting if the need arose.

Founders Park Director Maria Bagiotti announced that Founders Park programs and classes had been cancelled due to most programs and classes having more than ten people.

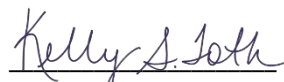
Mayor Forster asked for increased communication to the public, by the Public Information Officer, regarding breaking news/updates and measures being taken by the Village to help squelch the misinformation.

Village Attorney Roget Bryan provided a legislative update noting that the Keys related bills and vacation rental bill had died in session; the budget was being held up and was expected to be voted on Wednesday. He stated a massive amount of money would be reflected in the budget for addressing the covid-19 response. Mr. Bryan reported that the Washington D.C lobbying trip was postponed indefinitely and that he would try to reschedule the trip for early fall.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Jim Mooney made a motion to adjourn; Councilman Chris Sante seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Approved by the Village Council April 16, 2020.



Kelly S. Toth, CMC

Village Clerk