

**JUPITER INLET COLONY  
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**LIVE AND VIA ZOOM**

Meeting ID 585 628 8134

**05.08.2023**

**3:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

1. Mayor Comerford Called the Meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Roll call for the record:

Mayor Daniel J. Comerford III  
Vice-Mayor Milton Block  
Commissioner Richard Busto  
Commissioner Mark Ciarfella  
Commissioner Marie Rosner

Chief of Police John Pruitt  
Town Administrator Kevin Lucas  
Town Attorney William P. Doney  
Town Clerk Ivelisse Chico-Randazzo

Also present approximately 40 members of the Community via zoom and in person.

2. **Public Comments:** Tracy Siani congratulated and thanked the Commission, especially Vice Mayor Block and Commissioner Busto for the Committee. Cindy Keim made a statement regarding the time of the Commission meeting saying that the meeting should be changed to 7:00pm. She continued to say that since there is a lot going on in Town, people should be present to know and understand what is going on. Vice Mayor Block replied to Mrs. Keim stating that there are only three people who usually complain about the meeting times. He suggested that a survey be sent out asking residents what time they would prefer to attend the Commission meetings, but they would need to commit to attending a few meetings. Commissioner Rosner informed Mrs. Keim that residents need to call the Town Hall if they have questions instead of asking her. Ed Hocevar stated that it needs to be a democratic process. If the Commission wants to get younger residents to participate in Town government, 3:00pm does not work since most of the younger residents' work. Mayor Comerford read an email from resident Jay Goetschius regarding meeting times. The email stated that meeting times should be moved to after business hours to make them more accessible to residents who cannot attend daytime meetings. While zoom is helpful, it does not change the challenge of attending a meeting in the middle of the day. Mr. Goetschius also stated in his email the zoom has been a completely inadequate host and technology standpoint making the remote alternative unacceptable for in person. Mr. Goetschius provided examples of the last three meetings, citing how unacceptable the remote options were due to the technological issues. Keeping residents like him from running for Town Commission. Mr. Goetschius also wanted to know the procedure for hiring police officers. Mayor Comerford also answered his questions (via email) by stating that Det. Sgt. Beckman conducts all background checks, including but not limited to social media and internet searches, following the

requirements of FDLE, interviews with former employers and other persons who have knowledge of the candidate, physical and psychological examinations, and fingerprinting. Fran Wiatr asked if there were any updates on the North Walkway, Mayor Comerford stated they are waiting for the final inspection and once the inspection passes, the Town will petition the DEP so that they follow their own rule of having steps to the beach. In case there is resistance, the Town is prepared to have Art Landro write an affidavit and have everyone sign a petition. The Mayor is prepared to speak to the Director of the DEP as well as speak to the former and current Governors if necessary.

3. **Vote:** to approve Consent Agenda

- a. April 2023 General Operating Fund Budget Report and Financial Statements
- b. Minutes from April 10, 2023, Regular Commission Meeting.

**Motion:** Vice Mayor Block made a motion to approve.

**Second:** Commissioner Busto seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 5-0.**

4. **Commission/Staff Reports:**

- a. **Town Administrator-** No report
- b. **Town Clerk –** No report
- c. **Chief of Police-** Chief Pruitt stated was a pleasure serving the residents of JIC. He will have a lot of great memories. He also reminded residents that it is the start of hurricane season so please remove the coconuts.
- d. **Code Enforcement-** Mayor Comerford reported 8 incidents regarding whether people have permits. Issues have been resolved.
- e. **Town Attorney –**No Report
- f. **Commissioner Reports-** Commissioner Rosner had a few items to report, she stated that there are trees that are overgrown and need to be trimmed. She addressed the poop issue on the walkways. She stated people need to pick up after their dogs. She has cleaned some up, but it is a health hazard and asked that a calling post be sent out to remind residents to pick up after their pets. She also mentioned that there are people riding bikes on the walkways and when coming off the walkway, someone is going to get hurt because drivers do not stop. Also mentioned were solicitors, she stated she had a solicitor get very aggressive toward her and she in turn got aggressive back. She asked if there could be a policy put in place that requires solicitors to check in and show their ID. Commissioner Rosner also recommended that the Town should have a newsletter providing the Residents with more information.
- g. **Vice Mayor Block-** Vice Mayor Block reported that there was going to be a meeting at JILONA and that BLM was going to have a presentation.
- h. **Mayor Comerford-**Mayor Comerford announced that they have new stickers for each vehicle, they would be given out at the Police party in the park. The stickers are to be put on the rear driver side window of the vehicle so that vehicles that

belong in JIC can be easily identified on the cameras. Police Party in the Park would be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> and they would have Chick-Fil-A and ice cream.

5. **Announcement:** LEED Certification Gold Level Award

Mayor Comerford stated that thanks to the very hard work of Bill Whiteford, the Town has achieved the Gold Level Certification which is a very prestigious award from the U.S. Green Building Council. It took 1 year and 6 months to achieve this. Vice Mayor Block stated it is a big deal, especially for a Town of our size.

6. **Update:** Chief of Police Search Committee Report

Vice Mayor Block started his statement by saying that on the advice of council would not take questions after the presentation however, residents can ask or submit questions and he would answer them if Town Attorney Doney says it would be okay. Vice Mayor Block read his report stating that the Committee is committed to integrity, transparency and confidence in the effort and outcome JIC Commissioners will select the next Chief of Police with the goal of presenting the best possible candidate(s) to the Commission for the job. The Town was working on a new user-friendly website which will have a link called Chief of Police Selection Committee. There will be 3 folders, resident correspondence, committee documents and job description. All documents will be posted. The committee has accomplished to date:

- hiring Sheri Resnick, HR specialist
- held 1<sup>st</sup> organizational meeting
- hired Mike Piper, Florida Municipal Government Employment Attorney
- created and finalized Chief of Police job description
- posted position on Indeed, Florida League of Cities, and Florida Chiefs Association.

Next step for the committee:

- collect, review, and recommend candidates by Sheri Resnick
- Committee members will individually review all resumes submitted, including those recommended by Ms. Resnick
- schedule second committee meeting to identify a small group of highly qualified candidates
- third committee meeting will be for the committee members to interview the candidates
- have background checks conducted on the finalists
- committee will present final candidates to the Town Commission.

While this all seems complicated and time-consuming, it will ensure that the committee is transparent and follows all Sunshine and ethics laws.

7. **Discussion:** Consulting Agreement with John Pruitt

Mayor Comerford stated that Chief Pruitt initially stated he was going to retire on May 5<sup>th</sup> but Chief Pruitt has agreed to stay on until May 25<sup>th</sup> because he still has work to do with us. He will also continue to work with us to get us through the filing of the TRIM package which needs to be submitted in September after the second budget meeting. Chief Pruitt has agreed to stay on until September 30<sup>th</sup> to file the paperwork after he assists with the budget. He proposed to work for \$9,000.00 a month which is approximately \$7,500.00 less than he was getting paid. Mayor Comerford recommends

that the Commission moves forward with the proposal because he is needed. Commissioner Busto asked if Chief Pruitt would continue to be Chief during that time or who would run the police department? Mayor Comerford stated that the Deputy Chief would be acting Chief until they hire a new Chief of Police. Commissioner Busto stated a person running for Chief should not be the acting Chief, they should have someone else, suggesting Lt. Schultz. Vice Mayor Block agreed with Commissioner Busto.

**Motion:** Commissioner Busto made a motion to have Lt. Schultz as the acting Police Chief until a new Police Chief is hired.

**Second:** Vice Mayor Block seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 5-0.**

#### 8. **Discussion:** Proper Use of Town Vehicles

Mayor Comerford stated that last year, the Commission voted on the Chief and Town Administrator not having take home vehicles, despite information given to the Commission that in the rest of the county, they have take home vehicles. Mayor Comerford stated that since then, the Town has gotten a truck and he will take full responsibility for allowing the Town Administrator to take the truck home. The Chief has never taken the Tahoe home. However, Deputy Chief Freeman takes the Tahoe home. He takes the Tahoe home because it is showing signs of rust. Commissioner Busto stated he was the Commissioner who asked for this discussion to be added to the agenda. He stated that last year, it was made very clear by the Commission that taking town vehicles home would not be allowed. Commissioner Busto asked Mayor Comerford to rescind his decision on allowing employees to take vehicles home. Mayor Comerford disagreed with Commissioner Busto stating that he explained his reason for allowing the Deputy Chief taking the vehicle home. Mayor Comerford explained the reason why he allowed the Town Administrator to take the vehicle home. Commissioner Busto stated the Commission had agreed that no employee would take any vehicle home for any reason and the Mayor has no authority to allow that at all. Mayor Comerford stated he would revisit this matter at a meeting because it is important to Commissioner Busto. Mayor Comerford stated that it is mean spirited that they do not have take home vehicles even after showing the Commissioners that all Towns, even smaller Towns have take home vehicles so that the Chief and or Town Administrator can get to Town in cases of emergencies. Vice Mayor Block stated that it is a fundamental point being made that the Commission voted on this matter and Vice Mayor Block stated he, personally did not have a problem with the Chief and Town Administrator having a take home vehicle, but knowing the culture of the Town, he knows people did not want to provide cars to employees. He stated that because it was voted on by the Commission, it needs to stop. Commissioner Rosner stated that she would like to see this revisited because other Towns allow employees and police officers have take home cars because if there was an emergency, they would not be able to get through anywhere for emergency reasons. Commissioner Rosner would like to have this topic added to the June agenda. Vice Mayor Block stated that in the meantime, no vehicles would be taken home. Commissioner Rosner asked what would those employees that have come to work in the Town vehicle that day do? An audience member stated that it was their problem.

Commissioner Rosner made an emotional statement saying that this is a small Town, and they are family. She said when someone gets sick everyone gets together and helps each other but the with behavior she has been seen and been hearing, she is saddened by it and especially for someone to make a comment like what was said earlier in the meeting. She stated that the employees are here to serve the community, the Commissioners are volunteers, and she has never heard things like what is being said before. She has been around for a long time, but they need to take care of the employees and take care of the people in Town. She would like to see more people coming together instead of the little groups forming in Town. She said she would like to see more people come together and be kind to one another because being kind goes a long way.

**9. Wrap-up and adjourn.**

Motion: Vice Mayor Block made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Second: Commissioner Busto seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 5-0.**

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Daniel J. Comerford III

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk Ivelisse Chico-Randazzo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**STATE MANDATED STATEMENT**

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he/she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Any person requiring special accommodation at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the Town prior to the meeting. Please contact the Town Administration Office, Administration Building, 50 Colony Road, Jupiter Inlet Colony, and FL 33469, telephone 561-746-3787.