

Mayor Report #4

Since assuming this position, I have stated three goals as mayor.

First, and most important, is to protect JIC, especially on the legal front. Second, is to secure town finances, to reconcile the close of FY23, help create a viable budget for FY24 and to protect our operating reserve. Third, is to leave the town government in the best condition possible for the next commissioners. To do so, we are making progress in these areas:

Police Department Reorganization: I'm pleased to report that under the very able leadership of our new Chief Dan Kerr, we have reorganized the JIC Police Department. To meet our current operational and budgetary requirements, we have eliminated the position of deputy police chief. We now have two sergeants and four patrol officers on staff with three part time officers to fill in. That is one less fulltime police officer than we had last April.

This reorganization is an ongoing effort. Chief Kerr continues to evaluate our requirements and personnel resources before he makes a final recommendation on staffing and structure.

Building Permit Fees. Earl Fischer, Chairman of the Building Committee, and his members are finalizing a revised schedule of permit fees for the Commission to consider. In the process of collecting delinquent fees, I have learned much about Florida statutes that govern the process and gathered information about the fee schedules of neighboring towns as well as the Town of Palm Beach and Jupiter Island. It is critically important to produce a lawful ordinance and to create proper procedures to guide construction in our community — I thank Earl and his Committee for the hard work toward that goal.

Public Workshop on Draft Town Charter: This Wednesday at 6pm at Village of Tequesta Council Chambers, we will hold a community workshop to present a proposed Charter to residents for questions and comments. Janet Saura and Bill Doney, together with the counsel of several residents, have produced the draft Charter. After the presentation and comments have been considered, the Commission will vote at the September 25 Commission meeting whether to approve the proposed Charter for a referendum to be voted on by JIC registered voters at the March 18, 2024, general election. (Note: Four commission seats will be on the ballot as well.)

Stub Audit update: The Stub Audit authorized by the Commission in June is underway. We hope to have the results for the November Commission meeting.

Operational Audit: This audit is progressing well. Ms. Michelle Berger, the consultant we've hired to guide us, has produced reports that recommend proper procedures and best practices for the town government. To come into compliance, we have adopted these procedures. I expect her work with us will be complete in October with a final report.

Legal Matters: We are defending three cases related to personnel issues, with two more possible. It takes much time and effort to work with our excellent lawyers to defend the town.

Some of the cases are covered by our insurance, others are not. The town has no choice but to spend money to defend itself.

As you know, we live in a highly litigious society and Florida's laws do not necessarily favor municipalities. It is not uncommon for our towns and cities to have multiple lawsuits at a time. We have been fortunate in the last twelve years to have few occasions to defend ourselves and to have won the suits against us. The events of last spring have put us in the position of defending the town. I am confident we will continue to do so successfully.

I appreciate the thanks and good wishes that many of you have expressed about our efforts on behalf of our beloved community.

We are making good progress and will continue to do so.