

**MINUTES**  
KEY COLONY BEACH  
CITY COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
Thursday, January 9, 2017 9:30 A.M.  
City Hall Conference Room

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** The Special Meeting of the Key Colony Beach City Commission was called to order by Mayor Ellis at 9:30 A.M.

*Present:* Mayor Jerry Ellis, Vice Mayor Ron Sutton, Secretary Treasurer Jim Pettorini, Commissioner John DeNeale, and Commissioner April Tracy. *Also Present:* City Attorney Tom Wright, City Clerk Kathryn McCullough, Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni and Assistant Building Official Steve Britske Public. - 2.

2. **Discussion of Interview Procedure:** Mayor Ellis started the discussion by stating the candidates would be called in one at a time. The candidates are on standby and will be called, via their cell phone numbers, as the Commission is ready for them. Mayor Ellis further stated there is no set time frame. Commissioners can take as long as necessary to satisfy their questions. At the conclusion of all the interviews another discussion will be held on how to handle the ballots after which the Commissioners and Department Heads will ballot. Vice Mayor Sutton asked if the ballots would be opened at this meeting. Mayor Ellis replied in the affirmative. Commissioner Pettorini asked, from a procedural standpoint, if references are checked. City Clerk McCullough answered background checks have been completed however references have not been called. She offered to call the references of the finalists and provide a synopsis report to the Commissioners. Commissioner Pettorini asked if the candidates would have the opportunity to ask questions of the Commissioners. Mayor Ellis answered in the affirmative. It was decided Mayor Ellis would ask each candidate the same five questions, after which each Commissioner may ask any questions they would like. Staff is also encouraged to ask questions.

**3. Interview City Administrator Candidates**

A. **Blanca Kulig** introduced herself as the Utility Clerk for Key Colony Beach. She presented her 20 years of diverse work experiences. She has been a resident of Marathon for 4 ½ years. She has recently completed a grants class. She has emergency management training through FEMA where she has been a volunteer for 16 years. She feels her greatest asset for the City Administrator position is being the City's Utility Clerk for the last 9 months. This has provided the opportunity to know the staff and the residents. She is also working with the Mayor on the contract for the construction of wastewater treatment plant. She is in her second year pursuing a degree in anthropology with a minor in environmental sustainability. She is fully bilingual. Mayor Ellis asked Blanca to detail her computer skills. Blanca responded she is very proficient with computers, she can set up a network, dismantle and reassemble computers, with Cliff Rydell's assistance she currently manages the City website, and she is familiar with QuickBooks and other programs. Mayor Ellis asked Blanca the five questions as follows:

Question 1. What do you know about Key Colony Beach? Response: Key Colony Beach is a very special island. A dream of Mr. Sadowski that was incorporated in 1957. One of the

first initiatives of the City was to investigate construction of a wastewater treatment plant. The City has approximately 800 year round residents and around approximately 4,000 during season.

Question 2. If I were to replace you in your current position what would I find most difficult to do? Response: My organization, which is a very strong point. When I first started as the Utility Clerk the office was not very organized. Over the past 9 months I have been able to correct that.

Question 3. What is the most difficult decision you've had to make in your current position? Response: Honestly whether or not to stay in the position as it was such a mess. But that was a challenge for me. I feel I can turn something that is bad into something that is good.

Question 4. If you only had one word to describe yourself what would that word be? And why? Response: Resourceful. For my entire life I have relied solely on myself to get through the things I needed to get through. If I encounter a situation where everyone says it can't be done, I believe it can be done, I just have to find a way to do it.

Question 5. Please give examples of how you resolve conflict. Response: I resolve conflict by talking to people. Part of my anthropology education is exactly that – to be able to mediate through problems. I believe communication is a very strong point in being able to resolve conflict.

Commissioner Pettorini stated this is a new experience for the Commission, moving from a council form of government to a council-manager form of government. The skill set for the City Administrator position puts a lot more emphasis on executive leadership rather than administrative functions. How do you react to this? Response: I do have those skills. In most of the companies where I was office administrator I did the hiring, the firing, the training and the payroll.

Commissioner Tracy asked if Blanca had any experience with State regulations and procedures. Response: When I worked for Universal Studios there were a lot of government contracts and government regulations I had to abide by. I have also learned a lot in the grant certification class I took.

Commissioner Pettorini asked if Blanca she could cite examples where she participated in a response or responses to government regulations occurring in the office. Response: Yes, with the sewer treatment plant there are a lot of regulations. Everything that is submitted has regulations to it which I cross reference to make sure we are in compliance.

Assistant Building Official Britske asked Blanca if she is prepared to give him direction with what his responsibilities are? Response: Yes I am. I have watched the transition going on in the Building Department. Transition is not easy and I know it has not been easy for you. I have been making notes on what every Department needs.

Mayor Ellis stated the position requires a lot of time out of the office, at the sewer plant, at the public works department, at the parks. Are you prepared to follow suit? Response: Yes, that is part of my plan. As City Administrator I would probably visit the sewer plant twice a day. I would also attend meetings outside of the City to get a sense of what is going on in the area.

Attorney Wright explained the Commission is creating this position on a part-time basis as an independent contractor which is very different from an employee. An independent contractor provides their own materials, runs their own business and performs the tasks with less

supervision than an employee. Would this type of arrangement work for you and what do you feel would be the challenges? Response: I don't think there would be any challenges. I would have more freedom to get the things done that I need to get done. Although this is part-time, in the beginning I feel it would require more than 4 hours a day, but I feel that is a sacrifice someone in this position should be willing to make.

City Clerk McCullough asked Blanca what questions she had for the Commissioners? Response: I would ask each commissioner what is their vision for the future of Key Colony Beach. Vice Mayor Sutton said keeping Key Colony Beach the Gem of the Florida Keys. Mayor Ellis echoed Vice Mayor Sutton's comment. Commissioner DeNeale stated that goes hand in hand with meeting the environmental challenges with the sewer plant, with sea level rise, with the condition of the canals, being able to stay ahead of the increased demands from the State and keeping up with technology. Vice Mayor Sutton also feels it is important to keep the tax rate as low as possible for the citizens. Commissioner Pettorini stated being in an area of critical state concern presents a unique set of responsibilities. An additional concern is the population shift. Key Colony Beach has almost become a community of investors. The concern here is the sense of community gets lost. He feels there needs to be more outreach into the community to get citizens more involved. Commissioner Tracy agreed with Commissioner Pettorini's concerns.

**B. Donald Cochran** introduced himself the as the Assistant City Manager for Public Services with the City of Winter Garden, FL with a population of approximately 40,000. He manages/administrates approximately 90 employees in the areas of water treatment, wastewater treatment, stormwater collection, streets maintenance, solid waste and recycling, environmental services and the cemetery. He also manages and budgets their capital improvement projects. He oversees the budgets for the various divisions. Mayor Ellis asked Mr. Cochran the five questions as follows:

Question 1. What do you know about Key Colony Beach? Response: Until I saw your ad I did not even know it existed. I called your City Clerk who filled me in on some of the history of Key Colony Beach.

Question 2. If I were to replace you in your current position what would I find most difficult to do? Response: I think you would have a hard time finding someone with my background and all the disciplines I have experience in.

Question 3. What was the most difficult decision you've had to make in your current position? Response: The most difficult decisions I've had to make was terminating employees. During the interview process with Winter Garden I could tell by the questions being asked that they had a lot of 'dead wood'. The first year I was in Winter Garden I averaged terminating someone at least once a month. That is always difficult to do.

Question 4. If you only had one word to describe yourself, what would that word be? And why? Response: Integrity. I believe I have very strong integrity. Either you have it or you don't.

Question 5. Please give examples of how you resolve conflict. Response: When someone comes to me with a problem I always know there are 2 sides to every story so I try to get all parties together to work out a solution.

Question 6. What concerns you most about relocating to the Keys? Response: I spoke with Chief DiGiovanni about this subject this morning. I am sure I will be able to find housing either in this community or on Marathon Island.

Vice Mayor Sutton asked about Mr. Cochran's plan for early retirement from Winter Garden. Mr. Cochran replied the City of Winter Garden has offered early retirement at 62 to its

employees providing the same benefits as if they retired at 65. Mr. Cochran is going to retire at 62, with that income and the salary being offered for this position, it is something he and his wife would be able to live on. He cannot think of a better place to retire than in the Keys.

Commissioner DeNeale asked what 2 or 3 major points of the Sunshine Law would impact the job of City Administrator. Mr. Cochran said the Commissioners cannot meet on issues outside of a public meeting. The City Manager he works for meets individually with Commissioners to brief them about items on an agenda prior to a meeting. Mr. Cochran feels this is beneficial for the Commissioners and does not feel it is a violation of the Sunshine Law.

Commissioner Pettorini asked Mr. Cochran what practices of his current City Manager would he emulate and what would he do differently. Mr. Cochran has watched previous managers coach subordinates to prepare them to 'move up' into higher positions. He has worked for some managers that will put 'fluff' into a budget just to give a commissioner something to cut. He believes you should budget only what you need. His current City Manager is a visionary, which he believes has been good for Winter Garden. He would try to be a visionary for Key Colony Beach.

Assistant Building Official Britske asked Mr. Cochran of all the disciplines for which he is responsible, where are you the weakest? Mr. Cochran felt that would be the solid waste area of his responsibilities. Mr. Britske asked on a scale of 1 to 10, how approachable are you? Mr. Cochran replied 10.

Chief DiGiovanni asked what is the most important thing the police department should focus on? Mr. Cochran thought crime watch would be the highest priority and also traffic would be important.

Attorney Wright asked what Mr. Cochran what most appealed to him about the position. Mr. Cochran said that it is a part time position and the location.

City Clerk McCullough asked how long Mr. Cochran intended to work as he had mentioned retirement. Mr. Cochran answered as long as someone would have him and as long as his health holds out.

**C. Christopher Moonis** thanked the Commission for the opportunity to interview for this position. He has been to Key Colony on multiple occasions and feels it is a great community for which he has an affinity. He understands the cost of living here and he has prepared himself for that change. He has already secured housing if this opportunity comes to fruition. From a leadership standpoint he is big on organizational leadership and development. He prides himself in developing organizations up. Long range planning and long range visioning are essential. He trains people from the top to the bottom and from the bottom to the top on how this works. From a leadership standpoint he subscribes to the style outlined in a book authored by Jim Collins called Good to Great. This concept recognizes the A players, the B players and the C players. You give the A players the tools and resources needed to do a job and then basically get out of their way. The B players are solid strong people who management should spend most of its time developing. The C players are the ones managers typically spend most of their time dealing with because they require the most energy to move forward. In his management style, he believes you lead people, you manage things. The things you need to get accomplished, the paperwork, the financials, the

budget, revenue collection etc. Once this is all in place and working you go back to leadership. So after this, how do you manage the community? First of all, as a local government leader, you have to invest yourself. You have to volunteer in the community which he has done in every local government role he has been in. A local government leader must have an open door policy. In conclusion he believes you must have a passion for the community and for your position as a local government leader. He is proud to be in local government. He is a member of ICMA. With his current employer Mr. Moonis has acquired \$1.5 million in Federal grant money. After you get grant money it should be leveraged. He expects to leverage a \$1.5 million grant awarded to his current employer into about \$6 million. Safety is number one to Mr. Moonis, be it police, fire or EMS. They are the front line warriors and must be kept as safe as possible. The employees must also be kept safe as well as the community. Mayor Ellis asked Mr. Moonis the five questions as follows:

Question 1. What do you know about Key Colony Beach. Response: The residents are what makes Key Colony Beach what it is. Anyone can read the website, but I have been fortunate to visit Key Colony Beach 6 to 8 times. I have attended the City Commission meetings. I went the Fishing and Boating Club dinner. I have ridden every street. I have read the minutes for the last 12 months.

Question 2. If I were to replace you in your current position, what would I find most difficult to do? Response: I was recruited as a consultant for my current position to find a new manager for the city. I was resolving many issues and problems from day one. After 2 months I asked the Council President when he wanted to start looking for a new manager. The Council President requested that I stay as the city manager. During my tenure I put many new processes in place. It will probably be a challenge to find someone who will understand all those moving parts.

Question 3. What was the most difficult decision you've had to make in your current position? Response: I had to make some difficult decisions with staffing. The last thing I want to do is let somebody go. I had to do that with 2 individuals, reposition a 3<sup>rd</sup> person and then reorganize the public works department.

Question 4. If you only had one word to describe yourself, what would that word be? And why? Response: Passionate. The things I am passionate about I am 100% in. I am passionate about this profession.

Question 5. Please give examples of how you resolve conflict. Response: First, I assess the conflict to find the root cause. Then I investigate to make sure I have all the information from all sides. I then bring in the individuals, be that employees, residents, contractors, commissioners, etc. After that I am diplomatic and professional but I don't play games. I attack the issue directly.

Question 6. What concerns you most about relocating to the Keys? Response: Any time you change locations, whether it be from PA to OH or from PA to FL there are concerns, family concerns. However, I have assured my children that it is just as quick to jump a plane from Ft. Lauderdale to PA as it is to get a plane from OH to PA. The cost of relocating is something I have already prepared for. I am not naive. I have been looking for an opportunity like this for several years. I understand the position is part time. I understand there are no benefits. I think this opportunity is right. We can talk about those other things down the road if this works out. I am willing to take that risk on my end. You obviously will also have to take that chance on me.

Commissioner DeNeale asked, with respect to the environment, what Mr. Moonis feels are the 2 top concerns for maintaining Key Colony Beach the way we like it? Mr. Moonis said hurricane preparations and safe evacuations would also be a priority. The quality of the

water, both the drinking water and the ocean would be a priority to maintain the quality of life here. The turtles, I've read the minutes about the turtles and the lights. All of the environment should be a priority for all of us, everywhere, but especially in this very sensitive area.

City Clerk McCullough asked Mr. Moonis when he could start. Mr. Moonis is required to give 30 days notice under his existing contract. However, he felt 60 days would probably be more realistic.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Moonis for being well prepared for the interview.

**E. Mike Puto** introduced himself as having broad experience and a compulsive dedication to public service. He has experience as local businessman, a politician, an Emergency Manager and City Manager for Marathon. He is a fiscal conservative. He believes in the concept of a team. I surround myself with smart, competent, intelligent individuals who work as a team to get things done. Because of Hurricanes George and Wilma, and various other small events, I am acutely aware of the difficulty of managing a city during the time of crisis. My work with the fire department and EMS gives me the ability to help in the protection of Key Colony Beach during day to day emergencies. My experience gives me the ability to negotiate and find the best compromises for Key Colony Beach in interactions with other governments and jurisdictions. I have lived a life of selflessness and endless service to the public. I assisted Marathon as it took its first steps forward and during Hurricane Wilma which led to the reconstruction of the fire station after the disaster. The team oversaw the construction of the new city hall. The team, I put together, oversaw the transition of the City's utilities from the days of the FCAA to a robust, independent City run utility. During the budget cycle I provided for the staffing needed to bring Marathon into the FEMA Community Rating System. Within Key Colony Beach I worked with FKEC on the Causeway to bring Key Colony Beach a better view along that area. I worked with the Key Colony Beach consultants to help resolve the comprehensive plan concerns related to the State Rate of Growth ordinance. Paramount is my connectedness to other local governments and State representatives. I am the grandson of Phil Sadowski who developed Key Colony Beach. I have worked tirelessly to protect the working waterfronts, fishing, boating, diving and recreational amenities for the Florida Keys. Tourism and commercial fishing are the mainstay of the economy of the middle keys and I will work to see these continue. I feel I am the best qualified to put a team together to bring Key Colony Beach into the future for continued success along with fiscal conservatism. Mayor Ellis asked Mike the 5 questions as follows:

Question 1. What do you know about Key Colony Beach? My grandfather developed Key Colony Beach. As a child I remember the fun times when someone would holler 'fire in the hole' and the dynamite would explode.

Question 2. (Reworded) What was the most difficult thing you had to do as City Manager of Marathon. Response: The most difficult thing is all the State regulations and working with staff to get them done. The other thing is working for 5 bosses. They have their concerns and their constituents. I would do my homework and talk to the constituents before the meetings to try to resolve issues ahead of time.

Question 3. (Not asked) What was the most difficult decision you've had to make in your current position.

Question 4. If you had one word to describe yourself what would that word be? And why? Response: Dedicated. I am dedicated to my community, been here all my life. I give 100 +

% every time I do something. You can always call me when you need something done. I really love this place.

Question 5. Please give examples of how you resolve conflict. Response: A lot of times conflict occurs when you talk about development rights and you're trying to come up with the right answers to make sure everybody is comfortable. The biggest thing is all the development taking place, the neighbors complain. It a tough situation. The whole idea is to resolve the issue, you don't have to be 'butting heads' every single time. The conflict is massive in some of the areas just because of who has a problem. You have to take care of that problem that day and especially if it happens to be a Commissioner.

Mayor Ellis asked when Roger Hernstadt left did you go to the City or did the City seek you out to help them. Mr. Puto reported Marathon Mayor Dick Ramsey, at a commission meeting, requested Mike serve as City Manager until a replacement was found.

Commissioner DeNeale stated even though the State considers Key Colony Beach is an of Area of Critical State Concern, he feels Key Colony Beach should have full build out rights. Commissioner DeNeale asked Mr. Puto how he would approach that. Mr. Puto answered that he would not want to reinvent the wheel as he knows other areas have the same problem, so he would surround himself with smart people, with the same problem, from the County, from Marathon and from other areas around the State, to come up with a viable solution. He does not have a total answer for it but he knows there are a lot of options. He feels that with a team effort something can be done.

Commissioner Pettorini asked about Mr. Puto's timeline with Marathon. Mr. Puto answered he was Community Services Director in 2003. After Manager Jenke, Mr. Puto was City Manager for about 4 ½ years, then Clyde Burnett was City Manager for a short time, after him was Roger Hernstadt, then Mr. Puto went back in the City Manager for another 2 ½ years. Commissioner Pettorini asked if Marathon had a formal review process. Mr. Puto answered no. Commissioner Pettorini then asked what Mr. Puto would do differently here. Mr. Puto indicated he would be a little tougher when speaking to the Commission and not totally be afraid of 3 votes. Of course personalities play a role and he doesn't throw any one under the bus including staff.

Commissioner Tracy stated she has concerns with Mr. Puto's technological abilities. Mr. Puto indicated he would sit down with staff once a week to find out what's happening in the field and what needs to be done to make things work. When you're talking about computers, the Marathon Building Department has done very well with technology. Mr. Puto said he is not a computer expert however he relies on those people. A meeting could be set up to see what Marathon has that works and see if it would work here. Just like the Sheriff's Office works very well with the Police Department here. From that standpoint each staff member will have an idea of what needs to be done and we will do it as a team effort.

City Attorney Wright asked what about a part time position appeals to Mr. Puto. Mr. Puto said he likes to go out and be with the public. There are very few people he does not know if you need help. For instance, if he called the County today and said he needed 2 bulldozers and a crane, they would be here tomorrow.

Mayor Ellis reiterated when the DEP was visiting the City of Marathon, and Key Colony Beach did not know there were there, it was Mr. Puto that called this office and invited him to meet the DEP and hear what they are talking about. That one meeting started our

relationship with the State of Florida. That meeting would have not occurred if Mr. Puto had not made that call.

**F. Kerry Willis** said she is excited to be here. She indicated she has enjoyed the study of all the City's paperwork, the budget and the CAFER. She has attended the Commission meetings and walked around the community meeting many of the residents. Many cities hiring a professional administrator for the first time do so after years of neglect or mismanagement of some issue, or many issues, but that is not the case with Key Colony Beach. The budget is in good order, the comp plan is up to date and infrastructure is in good condition. She toured the wastewater treatment plant and looked at all facets of the upgrades which will assure compliance with the DEP advance wastewater treatment standards. The staff is very competent and appear to be very committed to the City. The Police Department and the Building Department do a great job. This is a small community where we live and work together, we all drink the same water and deal with the same environmental issues. It is all about encouraging one and other and being part of the team. Ms. Willis said she looks for opportunities to run government more like a business. To be responsible and accountable to the shareholders which are the residents here. To give excellent customer service both internally and externally. She leads by example and would not ask anyone to do something she would not do herself. If she doesn't know the answer to something she will tell you that, do the research and then get back to you with all the information you, as a Commission, need to make an informed decision. Mayor Ellis asked the 5 questions as follows:

Question 1. What do you know about Key Colony Beach? Response: I know the City was incorporated in 1957 by Phil Sadowski who developed it as the Gem of the Florida Keys. It is a small town community that has been well stewarded by the Commission and many volunteer boards.

Question 2. If I were to replace you in your current position what would I find most difficult to do? Response: My current position is semi-retired. Mayor Ellis said that being the case this question could be passed.

Question 3. What was the most difficult decision you've had to make in your career? Response: The most difficult decisions are those dealing with terminations that will have an adverse impact on someone's life. Other difficult decisions occur when you are put in a position of accountability without being given the authority to make necessary changes.

Question 4. If you only had one question to describe yourself, what would that word be? And why? Response: Cheer leader, team builder. I am very good at building a consensus and sometimes in very hostile environments. Because of this ability I have been able to forge alliances in some very unique situations.

Question 5. Please give examples of how you resolve conflict: Response: My management style has been adaptive beginning when I was City Manager in Lake Worth. I did not apply for that job, I was drafted under extremely difficult circumstances. My first decision there was whether or not to declare a state of financial emergency. I did not declare the emergency, but went in and met with Department Heads and made some very deep cuts that had significant impacts on the individuals there.

Vice Mayor Sutton stated this is a part-time position and asked if that is what she is looking for or is she hoping it will become full time or will she be looking for a full time position somewhere else? Ms. Willis said she would not be looking for a full time position. This opportunity is exactly what she is looking for at this stage of her life.



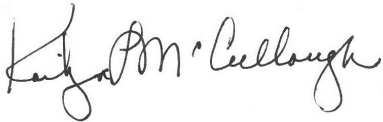
Commissioner Pettorini asked what Ms. Willis learned at the City of Lake Worth that she was able to use at the City of Boynton Beach? Ms. Willis said the biggest thing she learned from correcting some any issues at Lake Worth was the value of a getting a good consensus. Breaking down long term objectives into 1 year, 3 year and 5 year subsets was helpful in setting budgets.

**4. Commissioner/Staff Discussion of Candidates:** The Commissioners and staff members discussed the candidates. Following the discussion Mayor Ellis asked Commissioners and staff to mark the ballots for no more than 3 of the candidates, sign the ballots, and give them to Attorney Wright.

**5: Ballot on Candidates:** Attorney Wright tabulated the ballots and announced the results as follows: Donald Cochran – 0; Blanca Kulig – 1; Christopher Moonis – 5; Mike Puto – 5; and Kerry Willis – 6. Mayor Ellis announced Mr. Moonis, Mr. Puto and Ms. Willis will be invited to the January 12, 2017 Commission Meeting. Each candidate will be given the opportunity to make a ‘closing’ statement. Commissioners may ask questions at this time. Only the Commissioners will ballot at this meeting. Ballots will again be given to Attorney Wright to tabulate and announce the results. If no candidate receives 3 votes, the low vote getter will be removed and the Commissioners will vote again.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathryn L. McCullough  
City Clerk

**Note: These minutes are unofficial and have not been formally approved by the Commission. The approval will be at the next scheduled Commission meeting.**

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