



**ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS  
SPECIAL CALL VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Founders Park Community Center  
87000 Overseas Hwy  
Islamorada, FL 33036  
Wednesday, February 5, 2014  
3:00 PM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Mayor Ted Blackburn called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. The following Council members were present on roll call: Mayor Ted Blackburn, Vice Mayor Deb Gillis, Councilman Mike Forster, Councilman Ken Philipson, and Councilman Dave Purdo. Also in attendance were Village Manager Ed Koconis, Village Attorney Roget Bryan, Village Clerk Synthia Lankford, Monroe County Sheriff's Office Captain Corey Bryan and all other appropriate personnel.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Roget Bryan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Ted Blackburn called for public comment; none was offered.

Councilman Dave Purdo announced that EMS had rushed Irving Eyster to the hospital earlier in the day and commended the EMS personnel for their actions.

Mayor Ted Blackburn announced the food bank at the Baptist Church at mile marker 81 is in need of donations of canned food.

**IV. ITEMS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION**

**A. Village Manager Annual Evaluation**

Village Manager Ed Koconis requested to open the discussion. Mr. Koconis stated he has thoroughly enjoyed his twelve year tenure at the Village of Islamorada and is proud of his accomplishments. Mr. Koconis indicated he had spoken with each member of Council individually and received direction that the positions of Village Manager and Director of Planning and Development Services would be separated. Mr. Koconis requested Council take the immediate action of terminating his contract without cause.

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Village Attorney Roget Bryan clarified Section 16.3, options after termination of the Village Manager's contract without cause.

Councilman Ken Philipson inquired if the Village Manager's contract could be modified to eliminate section 16.3. Village Attorney Roget Bryan advised the contract could not be unilaterally modified.

Councilman Dave Purdo asked if Mr. Koconis would choose to return to his previous position as Deputy Village Manager/Director of Planning and Development Services.

Mr. Koconis advised he would choose the Severance Payment.

Councilman Mike Forster stated he is ready to proceed to terminate the Village Manager's contract.

Mayor Blackburn inquired if Mr. Koconis would be agreeable to accept a contract for another position in the Village.

Mr. Koconis requested Council determine if his contract would be terminated and stated he is not willing to modify the existing contract.

Village Attorney Roget Bryan clarified the purpose of the Special Call meeting was the Village Manager's annual evaluation, as set forth in the contract. If a motion to terminate the contract without cause is passed by Council, Mr. Koconis would then have the option of returning to his previous position as Deputy Village Manager/Director of Planning and Development Services or the Severance Payment.

Vice Mayor Deb Gillis offered a motion to separate the Village Manager/Director of Planning and Development Services positions. Councilman Mike Forster seconded the motion; after further discussion the motion and second were withdrawn.

Councilman Dave Purdo made a motion to terminate the Village Manager's contract without cause. Councilman Mike Forster seconded the motion. Council voted all in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Village Attorney Roget Bryan advised Council that Contract Section 16.3 was triggered by termination without cause and the Village Manager would now have the option of returning to his previous position as Deputy Village Manager/Director of Planning and Development Services or the Severance Payment.

Vice Mayor Gillis stated she would be amiable to negotiate a new contract with Mr. Koconis for the Village Manager position. Mayor Ted Blackburn agreed.

Councilman Dave Purdo stated he would support Mr. Koconis as the Director of Planning and Development Services, but not as the Village Manager.

Mr. Koconis indicated he would consider negotiating a new contract, but expects to receive the Severance Payment option for the termination of his previous contract without cause.

Mayor Ted Blackburn suggested Council negotiate a new contract with Mr. Koconis with the same Severance Payment option as the previously terminated contract.

Village Attorney Roget Bryan recommended Council recess to review Mr. Koconis' terminated contract and advised Council could choose to rescind their vote after said recess.

Council recessed at 3:59 p.m.

Mayor Ted Blackburn reconvened the meeting at 4:26 p.m.

Finance Director Maria Aguilar presented Council with the estimated pay out for the termination of Mr. Koconis' contract without cause; severance \$55,460.00, sick time \$37,160.00, vacation \$13,310.00, plus twenty weeks of medical insurance, retirement fund contribution and taxes.

Mayor Ted Blackburn inquired if Council would entertain rescinding the vote to terminate the Village Manager's contract. Vice Mayor Deb Gillis stated she would support rescinding the vote if Mr. Koconis would consider re-negotiating the terms.

Mr. Koconis stated he believed the negotiations were complete.

Mayor Ted Blackburn inquired if Finance Director Maria Aguilar would accept the position of Acting Village Manager. Ms. Aguilar agreed.

Councilman Ken Philipson stated Ms. Aguilar should receive a salary increase while performing the function of Acting Village Manager. This item will be brought back as a discussion item on the February 13, 2014 Regular Village Council Meeting Agenda.

Village Attorney Roget Bryan advised Council the Charter requires the process to hire a new Village Manager occur within ninety days, and Ms. Aguilar would be responsible to appoint a Director of Planning and Development Services.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Dave Purdo made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Mike Forster seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

  
Synthia Lankford  
Village Clerk

Approved by the Village Council this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2014.

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