

Lame Duck Harbor Commission Talks and Tables

October 1, 2024



The mood at last week's Crescent City Harbor District (CCHD) meeting was apprehensive and tense.

Lame duck commissioners Harry Adams, Wes White and Brian Stone, along with incumbents Rick Shepherd and Gerhard Weber were poised to act to:

- Consider and vote to Introduce, Revise and Approve the CCHD Credit Card Policy
- Consider and vote to approve sending a response to the Del Norte Civil Grand Jury Report.

Both items were talked and tabled with no consensus.

The absence of any type of credit card spending policy has wreaked financial havoc and lots of frustration and anger by commissioners. Last week, The TriPLICATE reported rampant spending of thousands of dollars on a highly questionable Temporary Restraining Order against a Bayside RV tenant for \$6,000 and a list of

CCHD credit card charges, some legitimate, many not, mixed with the intent to obfuscate the of proper accounting of the CCHD.

The target of this unwanted attention appeared to be Harbormaster Tim Petrick.

As a result of intense public and media scrutiny, Petrick submitted his resignation as Harbormaster, effective September 30.

Prior to the New Business agenda item, The Triplicate distributed the latest newspaper to each commissioner with the prominent front page article on alleged misuse of the Harbor CCHD credit card and to all five candidates in attendance, running for the three vacancies soon to be open.

The spending habits of the recently-resigned harbormaster, one might call Mr. Petrick a spendthrift.

The five candidates in the audience at the CCHD Conference Room are John Evans, Dan Schmidt, Annie Nehmer, Linda Sutter and Devon Morgante.

Public Comment was highly critical of lack of commission oversight and alleged abuse by the Harbormaster of the CCHD credit card.

Commissioner response was also biting. Lame Duck Commissioner Stone said, "I'm appalled by what's happening over the years! I've constantly asked for copies of the monthly credit card. These requests were ignored and never brought to me. Until our most CCHD meeting, I'd never been provided these receipts."

Colleague lame ducker White also expressed his frustration in not receiving the credit card statements. "No personal use of the credit card should be permitted and if the misuse happened, we've got a problem that must be addressed at that time. The only person authorized to use the credit card is the office manager." Three term Commissioner White's after-the-event observations did not resonate with those in the audience.

Commissioner Weber questioned the legitimacy of many of the credit card charges.

Lame Ducker President Adams emphatically stated, "the only individual who should have a Harbor credit card is the office manager, and limit the use to \$5000. Food should be limited to \$50 per diem."

The can was "kicked down the road."

Stone, without any action on the credit card discussion, inexplicably moved on to the Grand Jury Response item which initiated an entirely new discussion.

Ultimately, the lame duck Commission tabled the discussion on credit card policy.

Submitting a response to the Del Norte Grand Jury was also fogged in confusion. For reasons not clarified, the response allowed both an executive and CCHD response. The executive response held a September 30 deadline. The CCHD response allowed an additional 30 days for the lame duck Commission. Stone questioned Petrick as to the executive response. The harbormaster stated he had nothing to do with the

executive response. Stone came millimeters short of calling the harbormaster a liar. “You are misleading the Commission,” exclaimed Stone.

Discussion on the response to the Grand Jury was halted, then tabled on a 5-0 vote

Commissioners adjourned to Closed Session centering on the evaluation of Harbormaster Petrick, in the wake of the commissioners voting a 7.2 percent pay Raise from \$125,000 to \$134,000 annual salary for Petrick.

During Public Comments, Community System Solutions principal Mike Bahr staunchly came to the defense of the beleaguered harbor master, to no avail and those in the audience including public speaker Sam Strait disputed Bahr’s praise of Petrick, alleging malfeasance and unethical practices.

The Harbor meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday’s at 3pm at the Harbor offices, 101 Citizens Dock Rd.