

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STUART CITY COMMISSION**  
**HELD August 5, 2021**  
**AT 4:30 PM COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**121 SW FLAGLER AVE.**  
**STUART, FLORIDA 34994**

**CITY COMMISSION**

**Mayor Eula R. Clarke**

**Vice Mayor Merritt Matheson**

**Commissioner Becky Bruner**

**Commissioner Troy McDonald**

**Commissioner Mike Meier**

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**City Manager, David Dyess**

**City Attorney, Michael J. Mortell**

**City Clerk, Mary R. Kindel**

**SERGEANT AT ARMS: Police Chief Joseph Tumminelli**



**4:36 PM ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Eula Clarke, Merritt Matheson, Becky Bruner, Troy McDonald, and Mike

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Clarke commented that she had been asked on what the City is doing in the face of the increase in COVID outbreak and if the City was going to do a State of Emergency. Requested this meeting to be advised by the experts and invited guests to provide information.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**1. MARTIN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION**

Renee Rouse, Public Information Officer for the Florida Department of Health and Carol Ann Vitani, Health Officer presented an update on COVID including a COVID Data Tracker, exhibiting cases by the month in 2021, and the trend with the changes as the public began to return to go out, cases by age group, prevention measures and CDC recommendations, and vaccines. Review of the three vaccines available and the rates to date in Martin County. Reported on vaccine outreach events and contact information was provided.

Commissioner Meier asked about demography and trends. Ms. Vitani responded that she would get that information to the Commission.

Mayor Clarke asked about death rates per age groups. Ms. Vitani commented it is mostly the elderly.

Vice Mayor Matheson asked about the “next mutation” of the virus. Ms. Vitani suggested the medical experts are the best to respond that question.

Ms. Vitani provided a website where covid statistics and facts are provided - <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>

Question from the public:

- 1) Caryn Hall Yost-Rudge – SW Palm City Rd; What companies are offering the free vaccines?

A: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson

 **4:54 PM**

## 2. PRESENTATION FROM CLEVELAND CLINIC ON COVID

Mr. Robert Lord, President of Cleveland Clinic, all three local hospitals, presented with a report of the following information: currently 78 COVID patients at Martin North, overall, between Martin North and Tradition, there are 141 COVID patients. The number has gone up consistently in just one month. The average stay of a COVID patient is 10.8 days, during the surge, noted over 90% of hospitalized patients are not vaccinated. Patients that are vaccinated in the hospital tend to have some pre-existing condition but are not ending up in ICU or on ventilators. Lord commented that this is a different and more infectious illness than last year and explained the Delta variant.

Commissioner Meier asked about stories/misinformation to highlight these for the people who were against the vaccine, got COVID, and now have changed their minds and have gotten vaccinated. Lord stated that would be the choice of the individual. Meier asked what the guidance for folks who have been vaccinated and what symptoms should we be looking out for that would tell us to go get tested even though we’ve been vaccinated. Lord stated it would be the same as normal symptoms. He explained how the Delta variant hides in your system for a period of time and you could be a carrier before you realize you have it.

Commissioners and Lord continued discussion of COVID 19, Delta Variant, Vaccination, and statistics.

Lord stated that he read the Resolution and commended the Commission, recognized they are limited in what they can do. He encouraged everyone to get vaccinated, create social distance during meetings, wear masks, and figured we should deal with this as he does not believe this is the last variant.

Mayor Clarke thanked Mr. Lord for the information. Lord commented that he is retiring the end of this year and thanked the Commission for inviting him today and for all the support over the years.

 5:30 PM

## COMMENTS BY CITY COMMISSIONERS

Vice Mayor Matheson

- Commented that he is wearing 2 masks because his wife is at home and tested positive for COVID. Commented that if we continue to fight, we will be living with this new normal. Only way to move past this is to get vaccinated.
- In Resolution would like to add to still encourage outdoor dining at same capacity and remove any barriers that would not allow that.

Attorney Mortell and Mr. Dyess stated that they would need to amend the Code or do a State of Emergency to bypass the code. Mortell read the Senate Bill 2006. Brief discussion on the possibilities of outdoor dining and removing barriers without declaring a State of Emergency.

- Vice Mayor Matheson commented to look at options to reward those employees who have gotten vaccinated and incentivize those employees who are still reluctant.

Commissioners discussed the incentives options.

Mayor Clarke

- Stated the impact of a State of Emergency.
- Announced the event for this Saturday, August 7, 2021 at the Stuart Police Dept., a school supply give-away, and vaccinations clinic from 11 to 2 p.m.

 5:45 PM Attorney Mortell read into the record Florida Statute 381.00316 COVID-19 Vaccine Documentation.

## COMMENTS BY CITY MANAGER

### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 Minutes Max)

 5:47 PM

## COMMISSION ACTION

### 3. COVID-19 FACE COVERINGS:

RESOLUTION No. 79-2021; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA ENCOURAGING THE USE OF FACE COVERING EQUIPMENT WHILE IN PUBLIC WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES OF STUART, FLORIDA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Commissioner McDonald would like to approve and add that the City Manager has authority to rescind and reactivate the mask mandate as needed.

Commissioners discussed if the City Manager would need more direction with data as to when to rescind or reactivate per scientifically based information. Commissioners agreed the Manager could consult with the Health Department and local guidelines but ultimately should have the flexibility.

Commissioner Meier requested to edit Section 1 to include “indoors per CDC guidelines”.

Public Comment:

- 1) Helen McBride – Flamingo Ave.; Commented that if the Resolution passes that it needs to be truly enforced.

The Commission noted that at Monday’s meeting (8/9/21), masks are highly encouraged, but it is at a County facility, the City does not have the authority to enforce.

 **6:00 PM MOTION: Move to approve adding Commissioner McDonald’s specification giving the City Manager flexibility to withdraw and reenact the Resolution and Commissioner Meier editing Section 1 to Indoors per CDC guidelines.  
MOVED BY: Commissioner Matheson  
SECONDED BY: Commissioner Meier  
Motion approved unanimously.**

#### **DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

 **6:08 PM ADJOURNMENT**

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**Mary R. Kindel, City Clerk**

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**Eula R. Clarke, Mayor**

**Minutes to be approved at the Regular Commission Meeting this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of August, 2021.**