

## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** July 31, 2020

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Commission

**VIA:** James Slaton, Interim City Manager

**FROM:** Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Resolution 2020-25 – Amending the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee.

**SYNOPSIS:** *Resolution 2020-25 modifies the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee, expanding the committee to 6 members from 3 members, allowing for each Commissioner to nominate members and changing the meeting schedule to monthly.*

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt RESOLUTION 2020-25.

### BACKGROUND

At a recent City Commission Work Session, staff was directed to prepare a resolution to modify the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee. This resolution expands the Committee to 6 members from 3 members and provides each Commissioner the ability to nominate one member each. The 6th member will continue to be appointed by the Chief of Police. This resolution also changes the meeting frequency from quarterly to monthly.

The Lake Wales City Commission on May 3, 2011 adopted Resolution 2011-05 to establish the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee “to provide a forum for respectful discussion that will lead to a greater partnership and stronger working relationship between all community members and the police department.”

The primary goal of the Community Relations Committee was to improve the relationship between the community and the police department.

The main provisions of Resolution 2011-05 were as follows:

- A three-member Community Relations Committee was created. Two citizen members were appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Commission, and one police officer member was appointed by the Police Chief
- The committee regularly met once a month in the Municipal Administration Building, but any member of the committee could call a special meeting if one was deemed to be necessary. The committee and its members were subject to the Sunshine Law and other applicable State laws and City ordinances
- The committee provided a forum in which citizens could express opinions or concerns and positively resolve issues they may have with police policies or procedures

Resolution 2011-05 was later amended with the adoption of Resolution 2012-02, which expanded the committee from three members to five (one police officer and four citizens) and removed the restriction of holding the meetings in the City Administration Building, allowing the meetings to take place anywhere in the community determined by the committee.

A final amendment, Resolution 2014-07, changed the meeting schedule of the Community Relations Committee from monthly to quarterly. Although the committee was effective in providing constructive dialogue between citizens and the police department, citizen attendance eventually declined, which led to the amended meeting schedule. The previous amendment expanding the board to four citizen members was not carried forward in this particular amendment.

Due to a lack of involvement, the committee eventually stopped meeting altogether around 2016. The committee, however, was not among the 10 boards officially dissolved by the commission on Feb. 7, 2017 through Resolution 2017-02.

The Police Chief and the City Commission have indicated an interest in re-establishing a Citizen and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee. A copy of the current Resolution, 2014-07, is attached for the Commission to review and to provide any desired changes to staff.

Input received has indicated possible interest in amending the committee member appointment process, with the Commissioners nominating one committee member each. If this is the desired direction of the Commission, the committee size would need to be expanded to six (five citizens and one police officer).

City Commission comments expressed during the July 21, 2020 City Commission meeting resulted in the following additional amendments to the proposed Resolution:

- In accordance with the City's Charter, each Commissioner shall recommend one appointment to the Mayor. The Mayor's appoints will then be subject to approval by the City Commission
- In the case of a vacancy, a new member will be appointed through the same process used to make the initial appointments
- The committee will be empowered to make recommendations to the City Commission on ways to improve upon the structure and purpose of the committee

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution 2020-25

## RESOLUTION 2020-25

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAKE WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA, REVISING RESOLUTIONS 2011-05, 2012-03 AND 2014-07, TO CHANGE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO THE CITIZENS AND POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TO CHANGE HOW OFTEN THE COMMITTEE SHALL MEET, TO EXPAND THE BOARD MEMBERSHIP; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the Lake Wales Police Department provides a valuable public safety service; and,

WHEREAS, the Citizens of Lake Wales play an integral role in the preservation of the peace, deterrence of crime, and prosecution of crimes; and,

WHEREAS, the Lake Wales Police Department values community relationships and input and seeks to gain a greater understanding and awareness of citizen concerns regarding police actions; and,

WHEREAS, the Citizens of Lake Wales seek the opportunity to express concerns, discuss issues, and gain a greater understanding of police actions ; and,

WHEREAS, the City Commission continues to strive for a greater partnership and working relationship between all members of the community and the Lake Wales Police Department and recognizes the need for greater education on the part of citizens and police with respect to one another; and,

WHEREAS, the City Commission and the Lake Wales Police Department seek to provide a forum for citizens and police to respectfully discuss issues and concerns in a public format before an incident rises to the level of a formal complaint; and,

WHEREAS, the City Commission and the Lake Wales Police Department seek to provide a mechanism for informal discussion of law enforcement policies and procedures because there is a belief that direct communications between citizens and police will bring about positive community relations; and,

WHEREAS, there is great optimism that, by positively addressing the need for greater citizen and police education with respect to one another, the City will lay a foundation of trust upon which a stronger and more open relationship between these groups may develop and flourish over time.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA:**

1. The Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee is hereby established for the purpose of:

- A. Providing a forum for citizens to express their opinions about police procedures and to receive informal information from the police department regarding police procedures.
  - B. Providing a forum for citizens and the police department to openly and respectfully discuss issues of concern with the hope that concerns can be positively resolved.
  - C. Providing a forum for citizens and the police department to engage in a dialogue that will be positive and productive and that will continue to foster a climate of trust and mutual respect.
2. The Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee shall be informally referred to as the "Community Relations Committee."
3. The following rules shall apply to committee membership:
- A. The committee shall consist of 6 members, each of whom will serve a two-year term. A quorum shall require the presence of four members.
  - B. Appointments. Each Commissioner shall recommend one appointment to the Mayor. The Mayor's appointments will then be subject to approval by the City Commission. One member shall be an active police officer serving in the Lake Wales Police Department and shall be appointed by the chief of police. Citizen members shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.
  - C. With the exception of the initial appointments, terms shall begin on July 1 and expire two years later on June 30. So that term expiration dates may be staggered, the initial term of two citizen members shall expire on June 30, 2021 and the initial term of three citizen members shall expire on June 30, 2022. Initial terms of all members shall begin upon appointment.
  - D. Committee members shall be subject to the Sunshine Law and other applicable state laws and city ordinances.
  - E. Minimum Qualifications of Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee Members -  
Members of the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee must be residents and registered electors of the City of Lake Wales. No State Legislator, County Commissioner, or City Commissioner may be a member of the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee. The City Commission shall be the judge of the qualifications of individual candidates for membership.
  - F. Minimum Attendance Requirements -  
It is expected that appointed members of the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee should attend each meeting thereof. Should a member of the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee fail to attend three (3) consecutive Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee meetings, that member shall be deemed to have vacated his or her position.

G. Removal of Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee Members; City Commission May Fill Vacant Position

Any member of the Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee may be removed by majority vote of the City Commission without a finding of cause. In the event of a vacancy, a new member will be appointed through the same process as stated above in paragraph B.

4. Regular meetings of the committee shall be held monthly or as needed in the Municipal Administration Building or other locations as deemed appropriate by the committee. Notice of a regular meeting shall be posted on the notice board in the Municipal Administration Building and at the location where the meeting will be held if not held in the Municipal Administration Building no later than forty-eight hours prior to the meeting. A special meeting may be called at any time by any member of the committee as deemed necessary. Notice of a special meeting shall be posted no later than twelve hours prior to the meeting.
5. The committee shall select a chairperson at its first meeting and shall develop procedures for bringing matters before the committee. Procedures developed by the committee shall require the unanimous approval of the committee members.
6. The committee shall have no power to hear or discuss complaints regarding officer misconduct. No provision of this resolution shall be construed to circumvent the requirements of the Police Officers Bill of Rights or the requirements of any State or Federal law to the contrary.
7. The following guidelines shall be observed in conducting committee meetings:
  - A. The committee should provide a forum in which the citizens and the police department come together for the purpose of developing positive relationships.
  - B. The committee should provide a forum in which citizens can express opinions or concerns.
  - C. The committee should provide a forum in which citizens can receive basic information regarding law enforcement policies and procedures.
  - D. The committee can be a place for citizens to commend officers who have gone above and beyond the citizens' expectations.
  - E. The committee should refer any citizen with a formal complaint to the proper complaint process.
  - F. The committee should not provide a forum for discussion or involvement in any form of officer discipline.
  - G. The committee should serve as the forum for positive and productive discussion that will lead to a greater partnership and stronger working relationship between all

community members and the police department.

8. The committee will make recommendations to the City Commission on ways to improve upon the structure and purpose of the committee.

**THIS RESOLUTION INTRODUCED AND PASSED** by the City Commission of the City of Lake Wales, Polk County, Florida at its regular meeting on\_\_\_\_\_. All provisions are immediately effective.

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Eugene L. Fultz, Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Clerk