

City of Marco Island

Press Release

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The following outlines the findings and intent to discipline Police Chief Tracy Frazzano from City Manager Mike McNees.

Factual Background

On January 20, 2021 City staff members were preparing for the first opportunity to offer the Covid-19 vaccination on Marco Island. A web link had been provided by Collier County to the Eventbrite platform to allow reservations for those vaccinations to be made. That link was to be made available on the City of Marco Island website and through the City's collateral social media accounts at 2:00 p.m. on that day.

At approximately 1:50 p.m. Fire Chief Chris Byrne was notified by Collier County staff that the reservation link had been compromised, and that one reservation for vaccination had already been made. That reservation had been made by Mr. William Frazzano, the husband of Marco Island Police Chief Tracy Frazzano. With public opening of the web portal looming, Chief Byrne chose not to attempt to purge the one early registration in that moment so as not to interfere with the remaining registrations. He did speak to Chief Frazzano, who indicated that she had provided the Eventbrite link to her husband, believing that the link would go live at 2:00 p.m. as planned.

At 2:00 p.m. on January 20 the Eventbrite registration link went live on the City's various portals, and approximately 3 minutes later all available reservations had been filled.

On January 22, 2021 Mr. William Frazzano, who is 65 years of age or older and a Florida resident appeared at Veterans Community Park on Marco Island and received the Covid-19 vaccination for which he had secured the reservation on January 20.

Analysis and Findings

A fundamental tenet of ethical public service is that as public employees we conduct ourselves in a manner that merits the trust and respect of our communities. It is also fundamental that we not leverage our public positions for personal gain or benefit.

The use of her position as Chief of Police to secure a coveted Covid-19 vaccination for her husband represents a clear failure on the part of Chief Frazzano to meet those standards. Even if early access to the registration system was provided inadvertently, as she contends, the fact is that once it became clear that access had been prematurely gained the vaccination was nevertheless still received by Mr. Frazzano. Chief Frazzano's wish that her husband be vaccinated may have been amplified by her underlying health issues, but the same can be said for many of our residents facing similar issues. In addition, as a first responder Chief Frazzano has already been vaccinated.

Availability of and access to the Covid-19 vaccination is far and away the most sensitive issue currently of these times. Chief Frazzano's lack of sensitivity to that issue, and her willingness to put her interest ahead of a carefully devised and fair public process to distribute the vaccine represent serious lapses of judgment on her part. As Chief of Police she is expected to be a role model in this situation, regardless of extenuating personal circumstances.

That said, the particular sensitivity of this issue should not overwhelm a career's worth of work, or the work the Chief has done on Marco Island. Accountability requires that consequences ensue from this lapse of professional judgment. Fairness requires that those consequences reflect the totality both of the current circumstances and Chief Frazzano's track record to date.

In discussing these events with Chief Frazzano, she has made no excuses and expressed contrition. She recognizes that even though providing the registration link to her husband and not realizing it was already functional may have been an honest mistake, her subsequent actions were not simple mistakes.

It is my determination that Tracy Frazzano will be suspended from her duties as Chief of Police for the City of Marco Island for a period of thirty calendar days though I will offer her a predetermination meeting within 24 hours before this decision is final. Thereafter, the period of suspension will commence at a time to be determined, but no later than March 1, 2021. During that period she will not participate in the operation of the department in any way, and will receive no compensation or accrue any benefits as would normally accrue to her as an employee of the department or the City of Marco Island.

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