



City of Jacksonville Beach • 11 North Third Street • Jacksonville Beach FL 32250

April 5, 2022

BY CERTIFIED MAIL/RETURN RECEIPT

Volunteer Life Saving Corps  
c/o Registered Agent  
427 North Third Street  
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

To the Board of Directors:

The City sent a nine-month notice to the Volunteer Life Saving Corps (VLSC) on March 9, 2022. That notice contained several provisions, including that the City staff shall have exclusive use of any City equipment, and that the City shall have exclusive use of the Station and its grounds during the City's normal Ocean Rescue operating hours to minimize interference with day to day operations.

The VLSC made at least three requests to use the Station on Sunday, April 3, 2022 for graduation and orientation of new VLSC recruits. Those requests were denied by the City due to the City's own scheduled training and daily operations. However, the Director of Parks and Recreation offered the VLSC an alternate location, free of charge to the VLSC. That offer was declined by the VLSC.

On Sunday, April 3, 2022, approximately fifty VLSC members (comprised of current members, alumni, and members of its board of directors) nonetheless descended on the Station and purposefully engaged in behavior intended to disrupt and interfere with the work of City staff who were on premises to perform the duties of their employment. VLSC members were onsite in the Station and the surrounding work area for approximately five hours, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, in spite of the fact that the VLSC scheduled activities did not begin until 12:00 pm. VLSC members were also observed using City equipment to train VLSC volunteers on the boardwalk, without prior authorization to use such equipment.

The action and behavior the VLSC membership displayed on April 3, 2022 is contrary to the commitments that the City sought from the VLSC in the draft agreement that was to provide an opportunity for the City and VLSC to forge a new relationship going forward. Indeed, not only was the VLSC's action disruptive and unprofessional, at times the behavior rose to a level that caused City staff to feel extremely uncomfortable, intimidated, and harassed.



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The draft agreement sent to the VLSC two weeks ago contained two specific commitments on which the City placed emphasis and communicated its importance: (1) that the VLSC agree to not interfere with the City's operations, and (2) that the VLSC agree to not intimidate or harass City employees during their performance of duties for the City. The unprofessional action and disrespectful behavior the VLSC displayed over this past weekend is seen as a rejection of any consideration for these commitments.

Based on the VLSC's action and behavior, the City has determined that it can no longer go forward with the VLSC as a community partner. Therefore, no further action will be taken by the City to advance an agreement of any sort.

Because the VLSC's behavior created a hostile work environment for the City's employees who were on duty at the Station, please be advised that VLSC is hereby barred from access to the Station. To ensure restricted access, the City will be changing the locks on the building. It is the City's understanding, through discussions with the VLSC and the American Red Cross, that no agreement exists between the two parties providing VLSC access to the Station, and that the VLSC is granted access to the Station only through the 2016 Agreement between the City and the VLSC. Should the VLSC have any agreements to the contrary, please provide such to the City Manager for review. Further, the inventory document in Attachment B of the 2016 Agreement states the VLSC does not own any equipment that is located in and/or maintained at the Station. If the VLSC can produce documentation or proof to the contrary, the City will deliver that equipment to the VLSC.

The City's Ocean Rescue Supervisor, Assistant Ocean Rescue Supervisor, and Director of Parks and Recreation are fully authorized to enforce the provisions of this notice. If any member or representative of the VLSC attempts to interfere with City operations, or to enter the Station or its property without authorization, City Staff has been directed to advise those individuals to leave the area, and contact local law enforcement if necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Staffopoulos".

Michael J. Staffopoulos  
City Manager

cc: Sandra Robinson, City Attorney  
Jacksonville Beach Mayor and City Council