



Crystal K. Kinzel

Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
3315 Tamiami Trail East, Suite 102
Naples, Florida 34112-5324
www.CollierClerk.com



Letter to the Community...

Dear Citizens:

Happy New Year! I think we can expect 2022 to be a very happy new year in Collier County, as our community continues to be nationally ranked as one of the best places to live, and our economy is strong. We are so fortunate to live in the greatest community in the USA!

Did you know that Collier County has the lowest crime rate of any metropolitan county in Florida, and one of the lowest crime rates in all of Florida? And the county jail population is down, too, which means savings for taxpayers. It's important that we never take our low crime rate, or the law enforcement officers who keep us safe, for granted. They deserve our gratitude and support. January 9th is *National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day*. Thank you to all those who serve with local law enforcement and other state and federal agencies. May God Bless all those who wear the badge.

Did you know that Deputy Clerks in our Court's Department administer and maintain filings related to wills and estates? If you are making New Year Resolutions for 2022, remember to make (and keep) a resolution that will protect your family and your assets - write your Last Will and Testament or establish a Trust. It's important to plan for the distribution of possessions and property, and if applicable, care for minor children. If you don't have plans, the courts may decide later. It's a good idea to get the assistance of a good attorney to make sure that the correct documents are prepared, and nothing is overlooked. The Collier County Bar Association can help you to find the best attorney for your needs - www.colliercountybar.org.

We recently celebrated a significant milestone at the Clerk's Office - the 10th anniversary of E-Filing! Ten years ago, Collier County was one of the first counties in Florida to transition to E-Filing, which is an efficient and secure method for filing court case documents through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal. Today, E-Filing has drastically changed the way the Florida courts and court clerks operate. Last year in Collier County, we processed an astounding 334,800 e-filings and created over 3,946,000 images. E-filing enabled the legal process to continue throughout Covid, our processing services continued!

I'm sure we are all looking forward to 2022 with optimism. There are so many opportunities in our nation, state and here locally to serve our community, I encourage you to be engaged and stay engaged. Together we can preserve our community and our country. Keeping Collier the best place to live, work and play. Enjoy the beautiful weather and a blessed New Year!

Collier Clerk Newsletter January 2022

Office Locations

Main Office Courthouse

3315 Tamiami Trail E.
Naples, FL 34112
(239) 252-2646

Satellite Offices

Airport Motor Vehicle
725 Airport Road South
Naples, FL 34104

Eagle Creek
6654 Collier Boulevard
Naples FL 34114

Everglades City Hall
102 Copeland Ave. N.
Everglades City, FL 34139

Golden Gate Gov. Center
4715 Golden Gate Parkway
Naples, FL 34116

Immokalee
106 South First Street
Immokalee, FL 34142

North Collier Gov. Ctr.
2335 Orange Blossom Drive
Naples, FL 34109

Customer Service
(239) 252-2646

www.CollierClerk.com



www.Facebook.com/CollierClerk

Jury Service in Collier County

Watch your mailbox...juror summonses are expected to increase in 2022

The Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court is responsible for processing jurors including qualifications, summonses, selection lists, reporting, and compensation. As jury trials slowly resumed in 2021, the Collier Clerk's Office mailed over 12,000 jury summonses to eligible county residents. We expect that number will double in 2022.

A jury summons is a court order directing a citizen to appear in court for potential jury service. A summons does not mean that the recipient has been selected to serve on a jury, but rather that he/she must report to the court to be one of a pool of prospective jurors.

Names are selected at random from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles database of licensed drivers and holders of Florida Identification Cards. A juror must be at least 18 years, a legal citizen of the United States, and a legal resident of Florida and of Collier County. They represent a cross section of our community and come from all walks of life including auto mechanics, engineers, teachers, landscapers, executives, dishwashers, students and doctors.

If a summoned person fails to show-up without a sufficient excuse, he/she is in violation of the law. The court could impose a fine, and such failure may also be considered a contempt of court.



After arriving at the courthouse, prospective jurors are assembled in the jury room where they remain until they are either dismissed or called for the *voir dire* process. *Voir dire* is a phrase that refers to the process for the judge and lawyers involved in the case to select a suitable jury by questioning prospective jurors to determine if any bias or prejudice exists toward the people or issues involved in the case.



Juries can be used for both criminal and civil trials. In a criminal case, it's the jury's role to determine whether the defendant is guilty of committing the crime(s) beyond a reasonable doubt. In a civil case, it is the jury's role to apply the law to the facts of the case to decide whether or not the plaintiff's lawsuit has merit, and then render a verdict. If the verdict is in favor of the plaintiff, the jury may also determine whether compensation should be awarded.

Staff in the Clerk's office are working with County staff on a project that will double the size of the jury assembly space and add two new courtrooms. Plans include improvements to the coffee station in the juror room. Also, a parking area on the upper level of the parking garage has been designated for prospective jurors to assist with on-time arrival.

It is often said that the right to a trial by jury is the cornerstone of our democracy. However, with rights come responsibilities. If you are called upon for jury service, don't think of it as an inconvenience or burden. Be excited! Be proud! You are fulfilling your civic responsibility as envisioned by our Founding Fathers.

Thank you for your service!

To learn more about jury service in Collier County, go to www.CollierClerk.com and click on the **Jury button**.



Evictions in Collier County – A look at the numbers

Since the federal moratorium on evictions ended in August, court eviction filings have increased Collier County, but they remain below the levels recorded before the onset of the pandemic.

Eviction filings in Collier County by fiscal year:

⇒ 10/1/18 – 9/30/19	927
⇒ 10/1/19 – 9/30/20	647
⇒ 10/1/20 – 9/30/21	838

According to information on the Collier Homeless Coalition website, residents in imminent danger of homelessness may apply for emergency rental assistance. Visit collierhomelesscoalition.org for more information.

Registration Now Open

Collier Clerk's Group Wedding and Vow Renewal Ceremony - Valentine's Day 2022



Photo from the Collier Clerk's first Group Wedding and Vow Renewal Ceremony held in 2020

Registration is now open for the Collier County Clerk of Court's Wedding and Vow Renewal Group Ceremony, to be held on the most romantic day of the year - Valentine's Day, Monday, February 14, 2022.

Engaged couples with a valid marriage license are invited to unite in marriage during a single group ceremony. Married couples who wish to celebrate their years together are invited to renew their vows during a single group ceremony. The officiant for both group ceremonies will be Clerk Crystal K. Kinzel.

To be eligible to participate in the group wedding, engaged couples must obtain a marriage license between Dec. 16, 2021 - Feb. 10, 2022. Couples may apply for a license at the Clerk's Recording Department, 3315 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112 or at any of the Clerk's satellite locations. Standard marriage license fees will apply.

Married couples renewing wedding vows do not need a marriage license and there is no charge to participate. Participation is limited to residents of Collier County.

After the ceremony, couples will celebrate with cake and refreshments provided by local sponsors. Each couple will receive a commemorative certificate, and a photographer will be on-hand to take photos.

The Valentine's Day 2022 event will be the second Group Wedding and Vow Renewal Ceremony hosted by the Collier Clerk. The inaugural event, held in 2020, was a tremendous success, with six couples uniting in marriage and fourteen married couples renewing their vows. The event was not held in 2021 due to the pandemic.

The Wedding and Vow Renewal Group Ceremony will be held at 11 a.m., Monday, February 14, 2022 at the Collier County Museum, 3331 Tamiami Trail E., Naples, Florida 34112. The museum was chosen as the venue because of its picturesque outdoor gardens and proximity to the courthouse.

All couples must pre-register by Jan. 31
by calling (239) 252-6879.

For more information about marriage license
applications, call (239) 252-7242.

To learn more about the event, including
sponsorship opportunities, contact Mike Sheffield,
Director of Outreach, at (239) 252-6879.

Clerk's Confidential Hotline Prevents and Detects Fraud

As Collier County's independently elected auditor and custodian of county funds, the Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller is responsible for auditing the expenditures of taxpayer dollars.

To assist in this constitutionally established responsibility, a confidential hotline is in place that serves as an effective mechanism for preventing and detecting fraud, theft, or abuse of county dollars and resources carried out by any person, business or organization that has a relationship with Collier County Government-Board of County Commissioners or the Collier County Clerk of Court, including:

Contractors

Subcontractors

Vendors

**Employees &
volunteers**

**Other entities, organizations,
or officials**

Report suspected fraud or wrongdoing, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **239-252-8412** or the confidential hotline at **844-ClerkIG (7544)**. Reports can also be made via our website, www.collierclerk.com.

Question for the Clerk's Office - Structure of County Government?

Question:

I just moved to Collier County and I'm having a hard time understanding local government. It's very different than the county where I used to live. Would you please help me to better understand the role of local elected officials?

Answer:

As with most counties in Florida, the structure of government in Collier County is specified in the State Constitution and in State Statutes rather than in a separately adopted county charter. County residents elect several officials to oversee specified responsibilities which are authorized by Florida's Constitution and Statutes. Below is an overview.

The Board of County Commissioners:



Comprised of five members elected from each of the five geographical districts of the county. The Board sets the property tax rate, adopts an annual budget, regulates land use, adopts ordinances, and establishes policies to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents. The Board appoints a county manager to implement policies and manage operations.

Constitutional Officers:



The State calls for the independent election of five Constitutional Officers. These officials are called Constitutional Officers because their office and duties are specified in the Florida Constitution and Statutes. Each Constitutional Officer is responsible for performing hundreds of duties, some of which are listed below.

- **Sheriff** - Chief law enforcement official for the county. Duties include maintaining the county jail and providing bailiffs for courts.
- **Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller** - County auditor, accountant, and custodian of county funds. Serves as Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners, Clerk to the Courts, and Recorder of Official Records.
- **Tax Collector** - Collects county taxes and fees. Duties also include the issuance and renewal of driver licenses and vehicle registrations.
- **Supervisor of Elections** - Administers elections in the county.
- **Property Appraiser** - Identifies and appraises property in the county.



Other Local Elected Governing Bodies

Collier School Board:

The State also requires each county school district to be governed by a school board. In Collier County, five school board members are elected from each of the five county geographical districts. Each candidate/member must live in the district that he/she represents; however, voters countywide vote for all five seats. Elections are nonpartisan.

City Councils:

In Collier County, there are three municipalities, each with its own separate governing council:

- **City of Naples**
- **City of Marco Island**
- **City of Everglades City**

Special Purpose Districts:

Separate units of local government, generally less than countywide, have been formed to provide a special purpose for the residents within a concise land area. Residents elect the governing body for each special purpose district.



Special purpose districts within Collier County include **Greater Naples Fire Control District, North Collier Fire Control District, Immokalee Fire District, Collier Mosquito Control District, and Collier Soil and Water Conservation District.**

Twentieth Judicial Circuit:

The 20'th Judicial Circuit is comprised of the following counties: Collier, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry and Lee. The State calls for the election of the following officials:



**Circuit Court Judges
County Court Judges
State Attorney
Public Defender**

For more information about local elections and current elected officials, visit the website of the Collier County Supervisor of Elections, www.CollierVotes.com.

Meet Thomas W. Franchino, General Legal Counsel in the Collier County Clerk's Office



Thomas W. Franchino was named General Legal Counsel for the Collier Clerk's Office in October 2020, bringing to the position 40 years' worth of experience practicing law. In his capacity as General Legal Counsel, Tom provides a wide range of services and advisement to staff across the agency, including review and interpretation of laws, statutes, rulings, and administrative orders.

Prior to joining the Clerk's Office, Tom operated his own civil litigation practice in Naples for 30 years. He is well-known in the area for his legal expertise in a variety of areas including local and state government matters.

Originally from Chicago, Tom has lived in the Naples since 1986. He graduated from the University of Illinois and earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Kansas School of Law. Tom is a member of the Florida Bar and the Collier County Bar Association. In addition, he is a member of the Southwest Florida Archeological Society, and he previously served on the Collier County Historical Archeological Preservation Advisory Board.

Tom and his wife, Jennifer, are proud parents of four children ranging in age from 17 - 30. His interests include archeology, exploring prehistoric sites, and following University of Illinois sports - *the Fighting Illini*. Tom is a passionate advocate for local historical preservation, and he is highly respected for his high degree of integrity and ethics.

Upcoming Meetings of the Collier County Board of County Commissioners:

- **Tuesday, January 11**
- **Tuesday, January 28**

Here's a partial list of *potential* items that *may* appear on the Board's agenda on January 11, 2022

- Waive the nighttime hearing requirement for a Land Development Code (LDC) amendment that will update the provisions of the Bayshore Drive Mixed Use Overlay District (BMUD) and the Gateway Triangle Mixed Use District (GTMUD).
- Authorize budget amendments to re-allocate fund in the amount of \$8.5 million within the Growth Management Department Stormwater Fund, for the purpose of stormwater improvements in Immokalee.
- Consider a zoning petition to amend provisions in the Master Plan & Town Plan for the Ave Maria Stewardship Receiving Area.
- Authorize negotiations with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., to perform professional engineering services for the Airport Road Widening Project, for an estimated \$1.5 million.
- Hear an update on boat ramp park use and commercial vessel launch permit sales.

Access meeting agendas at www.CollierCountyFl.gov or by navigating directly to the [Meeting Portal - Collier County, FL](#).



Regular meetings begin at 9 a.m. and are held at the following location:

**Board of County Commission Chamber
Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail East, 3rd floor
Naples, FL 34112**

Process for Speaking at Regular Commission Meetings

Speaker slips are located in the hallway. The completed slip must be turned in before the agenda item begins.

To Comment on a Regular Agenda Item:

To comment on an item that is on the *Regular Agenda*, register to speak for that specific item, for example, *11a—Landscaping of Medians*.

To Comment on a Consent Agenda Item:

To comment on an item on the *Consent Agenda*, register to speak for item 2A, *Approval of Today's Regular, Consent and Summary Agenda*. Items on the consent agenda are approved by the board in one action at the start of the meeting without discussion.

To Comment on a General Topic not on the Current Agenda:

To comment on a general topic that is not on the current or upcoming agenda, register to speak for item 7, *Public Comments on General Topics*.

We Want You on Our Team!

At the Office of the Collier County Clerk, we proudly carry out our mission -

"To safeguard public funds and provide high-quality essential services to the citizens and taxpayers of Collier County."

We have Immediate Openings Available in a Variety of Fields!

(Full-time employment, volunteer positions, and internships)

Courts
Customer Service
Recording

Finance/Accounting
Operations
Information Technology

Administration
Community Relations
Inspector General

Full-time employment benefits include:

- Medical insurance coverage starts on the first day on the job
- Paid vacation days, personal days and holidays
- Membership in the Florida Retirement System

Join our team!

No requirement for COVID vaccination

Apply at www.CollierClerk.com

Moving Forward!

We are moving forward with exciting changes and ideas designed to provide our customers with the highest level of customer service possible – the best in Florida!



*The Employees of the
Collier County Clerk of the
Circuit Court & Comptroller
Wish Everyone a Happy New Year!*

We look forward to
providing you, our citizens, with
OUTSTANDING customer services in 2022!

OUR OFFICE WILL BE
CLOSED JANUARY 17, 2021
IN OBSERVANCE OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. Day

For more information about newsletter
content or about the Clerk's operations:

Mike Sheffield, Director
Community Relations & Outreach
Mike.Sheffield@CollierClerk.com
(239) 252-6879