

SPECIAL PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

8:00 a.m., Thursday, March 1, 2018

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 8:00 a.m., Thursday, March 12, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Buckhannon and Rice, Chair Kinghorn, Administrator Tucker, Assistant Administrator Fragoso, Public Works Director Pitts and Human Resources Officer DeGroot; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Kinghorn called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Purpose

Consideration of staffing needs in the Public Works Department

A. Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor

B. Full-time, part-time Administrative Assistant

Officer DeGroot stated that the staff proposal was to add two (2) positions to the Public Works Department, i.e. full-time, part-time Administrative Assistant and Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor; the need for the positions, the estimated costs, respective job descriptions and the resulting organization chart were included in meeting packets.

Councilmember Rice opined that the maintenance and Facilities Supervisor should be someone who can be thoroughly trained to assume the Director's duties if he was unexpectedly absent for a period of time; she also voiced concern that a person with such a variety of skills could be found.

In Director Pitts' mind, the maintenance side of the job would be more flexible, but the top two (2) priorities would be drainage and the underground storage tanks; he thought that anyone could be taught how to do the general maintenance.

For the part-time position, Councilmember Rice asked if the Director expected this person to field calls and then do whatever was necessary plus handle paperwork.

The Director said that he expected this person to do purchase orders, maintain maintenance logs and preventative maintenance schedules for the vehicles, which he does currently; he commented that BS&A has helped with tracking daily maintenance and staying within budget although an aging fleet generally requires more maintenance. The Vehicle Maintenance budget was increased by five thousand dollars (\$5,000) when the incinerator closed and the trucks were forced to go to Bees Ferry; he stated that the fleet averages eighteen (18) years in service.

Chair Kinghorn inquired if the Director would be seeking additional funding in the FY19 budget other than personnel.

Responding to Councilmember Rice's concern, Director Pitts stated that the Public Works Building would need to be re-designed to accommodate the additional employees.

As for the current Assistant Director of Public Works, the Director anticipates that his title would stay the same, and he further explained that the position has evolved into one (1) of a working foreman now with duties he once did not have, such as beach cleaning, assisting with miscellaneous debris, etc. Therefore, the office would become that of the new Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor.

Chair Kinghorn commented that since hiring personnel typically leads to recurring and unknown costs, it is a sensitive subject; additionally some on Council believe that the City needs less oversight and “more worker bees.” He asked if the Director anticipated that that operational side of the Public Works’ budget would increase. He also asked whether it would be practical to bring the beach recycling and trash removal in-house when Mr. Schupp no longer provides that service.

Director Pitts opined that to bring that service in-house would be more costly than hiring a contractor because the job requires swinging shifts coordinating with the tides and can require double shifts in a day at times.

Councilmember Rice requested more specifics about renovating the existing Public Works building.

Director Pitts explained that Assistant Washington’s office would go to the Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor, a wall added near the front door to make an office for the part-time position and to open the wall from the eating area creating one (1) door for all three (3) offices. According to the Director, this appeared to be the simplest way to create three (3) offices.

Director DeGroot noted that the renovation cost includes HVAC to improve the air quality, revamping the eating area to make the interior more aesthetically pleasing, as well as the typical office equipment and furnishings.

Councilmember Buckhannon agreed that Councilmembers tend “to get heartburn” when the addition of employees is discussed. On the other hand, one (1) of the biggest citizens’ concerns at the forums was drainage and what and how to tackle it. Director Pitts added that the City must become more proactive on drainage, and to institute a public education program about illegal dumping of things that the Public Works will not pick up or dispose of, such as tires, batteries, etc.

According to Chair Kinghorn, another of the top four (4) concerns was sewer – despite the fact that Council again deferred taking action some preliminary steps toward island-wide sewer.

Although this person’s responsibility would primarily be sewer, Councilmember Rice asked if he would also deal with septic tank issues, and the Director responded that was not included presently.

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved forward to City Council the recommendation for two (2) new positions, a full-time part-time Administrative Assistant and a Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor for inclusion in the FY19 budget; Councilmember Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Kinghorn commented that other members of the Committee might have seen Director Pitts’ dashboard report for February and stated that he thought it was a good start. He said that it was geared to reduce the work for the Director and detail provided to policy-makers.

As a point of order, Chair Kinghorn stated that the Committee had made a mistake in electing him Chair, which he has recognized and will step down for Councilmember Rice to become Chair and Councilmember Buckhannon to become Vice Chair. He stated that his “position [would] be to support good government and support staff, . . .but better to do it from the side than as Chair.”

3. Adjourn/Conclusion

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 a.m.; Councilmember Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk