

Public Safety Committee
11:00 a.m., Thursday, February 7, 2019

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 11:00 a.m., Thursday, February 11, 2019 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bell and Ward, Chair Buckhannon, Interim Administrator Fragoso, Fire Chief Graham, Interim Police Chief Usry and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum of Committee members were present.

1. Chair Buckhannon 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. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 2019 as submitted; Chair Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – none**

4. **Old Business**

A. **Discussion of implementing pay-to-park system on Palm Boulevard**

Interim Administrator Fragoso and Interim Chief Usry met with SCDOT representatives in December to get their feedback on the City implementing a pay-to-park system on Palm Boulevard. City Council first discussed this topic in 2014, and it was not supported then because residents, as well as visitors, would have been required to pay-to-park in the designated pay to park areas. The discussion has been revived as a source of potential additional revenue. The Interim Administrator suggested that the first step should be a feasibility study to determine what the improved surface could be, the cost of the right-of-way improvements required by SCDOT, the removal of right-of-way impediments, on-going maintenance costs, etc.

Councilmember Bell saw the goals of a pay-to-park system on Palm Boulevard as generating revenue and getting a handle on the amount of traffic and public safety issues on Palm Boulevard. If the real goal was to reduce the number of cars parking on Palm because of the burden on public safety and public works, traffic and quality of life, eliminating parking on the landside of Palm should remain a consideration. For Councilmember Bell the focus should be on fewer people parking on Palm, less drain on all City services and the residential quality of life; he was not convinced that the City had to spend a lot of money to accomplish them.

Councilmember Ward said that he was not interested in taking the discussion any further if residents were going to be required to pay-to-park.

Chair Buckhannon acknowledged that the City would have to make a sizable capital investment if it were to implement a pay-to-park system, and he questioned how long the City would have to wait to see a return on the investment. A grid-like product the Committee wanted to see to determine if it could be used on Palm would stabilize the right-of-way, delineate the individual parking spaces and the four-foot (4 ft.) line and was advertised as being low maintenance.

Interim Administrator Fragoso recalled that, when she asked SCDOT's engineer for his opinion on eliminating parking on the landside of Palm, he responded that it would create more traffic congestion and drive cars into the neighborhoods.

Councilmember Bell asked if the City could choose certain areas along Palm to be pay-to-park, some to be no parking and some to be one (1) side only parking, and the Interim Administrator thought the City was free to do what it wanted to do.

Interim Chief Usry suggested implementing pay-to-park in phases to keep the upfront costs lower.

Rather than paying for a feasibility study on the whole island, Interim Administrator Fragoso suggested reviewing the feasibility on (1) block to get a "ballpark" idea on the potential implementations costs in order to make better decisions going forward.

Interim Chief Usry mentioned a parking app called "FlowBird" that works in conjunction with Parkeon, the kiosk provider, the cost to the City would be zero but it could generate revenue for the City. Additionally, it ties in with the enforcement side of parking.

The Interim Administrator said that she would reach out to Stantec to find out what they would charge to do a micro-feasibility study of issues related to a pay-to-park system on Palm Boulevard.

Councilmember Ward reiterated that he did not think it was right to penalize people because they live on Palm Boulevard.

B. Update on public transit initiative

Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that she had a conference call scheduled with the Council of Governments' staff on Friday, February 8th for an update on their initiative, and Councilmember Ward's CARTA meeting will be on Monday, February 11th. They will provide an update at the City Council meeting at the end of the month. **C.** Consideration of FY19 budgeted expenditure of \$247,644.75 to replace 27 portable radios and 25 mobile radios (in cars) for the Police Department (pg. 22, In 32, Police Department Capital Outlay - \$130,000; pg. 25, In 109, MUNI ATAX, PD Capital Outlay - \$65,000; pg. 28, In 263, State ATAX. PD Capital Outlay - \$65,000)

Interim Chief Usry reported that the pricing will be valid until June 30, 2020, and the timeline for all of the agencies in Charleston County to begin encryption is twelve to eighteen (12 – 18) months, and that countdown has already started. Referencing the radios the Police Department currently uses, the Interim Chief informed the Committee that they have been in use for twelve or thirteen (12 – 13) years, and, when one (1) breaks, it is discarded and replaced because parts are not available for repairs. The price quoted is twelve thousand three hundred fifty-five dollars (\$12,355) under budget. She reiterated that, if the City does not have the radios with encryption when the switch over occurs, the Police Department will be unable to communicate with the Dispatch Center or the agencies with whom it has mutual aid agreements.

D. Discussion of coyote management

Captain Swain reported that trapping began last week with one (1) trap placed behind 3001 Waterway, three (3) traps at Waterway and Forest Trail, three (3) at Waterway and Timber Lane

and three (3) traps near Back Bay near the 15th tee box. The traps were placed in locations where recent sightings have occurred; the traps caught two (2) coyotes in the first three (3) days and six (6) raccoons. Consideration is being given to installing cameras on Dune Ridge Lane and the vacant lot at 13th Avenue. Captain Swain has learned that, when traps are placed in a new area, they tend to be productive initially, but that they quickly become stale and need to be relocated. He told the Committee that February was the State's trapping month.

Interim Chief Usry stated that she and Captain Swain have discussed Ms. Kimber's phone conversation with the Communications Specialists insuring that they give the residents the correct information and that the call get directed as requested.

The Interim Chief also confirmed that Captain Swain is maintaining contact with the Coyote Coalition.

E. Consideration of beach handicap accessibility

In her research, Interim Chief Usry found that not many beach communities were allowing motorized handicap equipment on the beaches in spite of a State statute that allows them. In order for a motorized mode of handicap transportation to be on the beach, the golf cart must be registered with the State, the driver must have a handicap permit and the City would issue a handicap permit listing all of the pertinent data and establish rules like Sullivan's Island has. These rules would only allow use during daylight hours, stay within fifty (50) feet of beach access used, not to drive up and down the beach, not to linger on emergency beach access paths, and any other violations of the South Carolina golf cart law.

Councilmember Bell opined that the City was going to expand the number of parking spaces if it was going to allow motorized modes of transportation on the beach for handicapped individuals.

Interim Administrator Fragoso asked for an additional month to prepare a proposal for City Council.

6. New Business

A. Status of engaging a law enforcement consultant to conduct an independent assessment of management operations

The Interim Administrator said that she has several calls lined up and that she will continue to talk with people in the industry to get recommendations for someone who could be hired in the next few weeks. She also reported holding a meeting with the members of the Police Department where this initiative was announced and well received.

Interim Chief Usry added that, in the meeting, she announced her retirement due to her father's ill health and to assist her mother; it will be effective May 15th.

B. Consideration of providing transport to hospital for medical calls

Chair Buckhannon repeated his support for the City to have a quick response vehicle (QRV) and took it one (1) step further to the City having a vehicle for transporting people from the island to the hospital.

Chief Graham reported talking with members of the Hanahan Fire Department; they indicated that their biggest pro was that they felt they have increased their level of care. She reviewed the things she learned as follows:

1. Start with “basic life support” level of care, i.e. 2 EMTs on board;
2. Flat charge for transport, plus mileage, \$75 no transport fee;
3. Approximately \$250,000 to fully outfit one diesel ambulance;
4. Approximately \$30,000 for backup ambulance;
5. Approximately \$28,000 for a cardiac monitor; and
6. An ongoing cost for supplies.

The City’s current report-writing software is compatible with several of the billing software programs available, but the City would need to contract with a billing company that would charge between five and eight percent (5% - 8%) and ensure compliance with Medicare billing guidelines. The billing could vary between urban, rural and super-rural addresses; billing has a forty or fifty percent (40 – 50%) success rate.

If Council were to pursue offering this service, the service must be available seven (7) days a week and twenty-four (24) hours per day, and the department would add two (2) persons who would rotate with the balance of the crew to maintain their skill levels.

The City should determine if it has issues with Charleston County transport before making a decision and what type of calls does the Department see most frequently that require the services of an ambulance.

C. Discussion of FY20 Operating Budgets for Fire and Police Departments

Copies of the documents reviewed are attached to the historical record of the meeting.

For each department a two and a half percent (2.5%) pool has been established for employee wage increases for the FY20 budgets; it will be discussed by the Personnel Committee at its February meeting. Health insurance premiums are projected with an eight percent (8%) increase. Few changes have been made in the FY20 budget from the FY19 budget; decreases are derived from actual expenditures. This version of the budget does not contemplate an increase to vehicle fuel and oil; the expenditure can be adjusted as the process moves forward. Vehicle Maintenance has been increased to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to support extending the useful life of patrol vehicles to seven (7) years.

Chair Ward reported that he and the Interim Administrator have discussed the annual July 4th fireworks display and how expensive it is for the City primarily in wages and overtime. The Interim Administrator and the Treasurer will generate a schedule of costs associated with the fireworks display.

Chair Buckhannon stated that he would support cancelling the display, particularly since the City is not fully staffed at this time; he noted that, in spite of being fully staffed last year, the Police Department called in several Charleston County units to help with traffic.

Chief Graham recalled that the City is locked in to the same cost for the display as the last two (2) years, but this will be the last year.

The budget for the BSOs assumes the same staffing levels as the summer of 2018. A server damaged in the last storm event will be replaced by the funds in the Non-capital Tools and Equipment line of the Capital Projects budget for the Police Department. The budget figure in Maintenance and Service Contracts is the first money budgeted for the building's ongoing maintenance and is roughly one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of one percent (1%) of the insured value of the Public Safety Building (PSB); the other half is budgeted for the Fire Department. The line also includes twenty-five percent (25%) of the estimated cost of repairs to the PSB.

Contracted Services in the Municipal Accommodations Taxes includes the services of off-duty Charleston County officers to assist with traffic on Saturdays and Sundays in the season and their increased hourly rate. The Capital Outlay line includes twelve and one half percent (12.5%) of the total cost to rehabilitate the PSB.

Professional Services and Capital Outlay in the Hospitality Fund have been decreased based on actual expenditures.

Chair Buckhannon reminded Interim Administrator Fragoso that he would prefer that the City invest in "real-time" traffic counters from Hospitality Funds.

A second twelve and a half percent (12.5%) of the total estimated rehabilitation of the PSB in budgeted in Capital Outlay in State Accommodations Taxes along with the replacement of the Front Beach surveillance cameras and two (2) patrol vehicles rebudgeted from FY19.

The Interim Administrator reported that the State and Federal Narcotics Fund Accounts are being closed.

Of the sixty-one percent (61%) increase in Police Department expenditures, the biggest piece is the repairs to the Public Safety Building.

Councilmember Bell recommended that an explanatory line be added to the schedule stating that the increase in Police Department expenditures is heavily impacted by the repairs to the Public Safety Building.

The expenditures in the Fire Department also include the two and a half percent (2.5%) pool for employee wage increases, and overtime is fourteen percent (14%) of wages; six percent (6%) of the overtime is scheduled overtime, the overtime that falls to each firefighter as they work twenty-four (24) hours on and forty-eight (48) hours off throughout the year.

Councilmember Bell reiterated his request to separate "scheduled" overtime from discretionary overtime to avoid confusion by the public who do not know how the Fire Department operates.

In the Capital Projects Fund is the debt service and interest for the new 75-foot ladder truck, fifty percent (50%) of the cost to refurbish the 95-foot ladder truck and twenty-five percent (25%) of the total cost to rehabilitate the PSB. In the Rents and Leases line is the cost to rent the construction/office trailer for twelve (12) months.

Chair Buckhannon asked why the Fire Department staff was not moved to Fire Station 2 rather than renting the trailer.

According to the Interim Administrator, re-locating to Station 2 was considered, but was not a viable option due to the limited parking and to the small office space available there.

The Capital Outlay line in the Municipal ATAX fund includes twenty-five percent (25%) of the cost to refurbish the 95-foot ladder truck, the replacement of one (1) Ford F-150 pickup truck and twelve and a half percent (12.5%) of the total cost to rehabilitate the Public Safety Building.

7. Departmental Reports

The reports can be found in their entirety on the City's website.

Relative to the white chalk line, Interim Chief Usry informed the Committee that the Department will begin with a double white line on the non-ocean side of Palm.

8. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 5th in the City Hall Conference Room

9. Executive Session – not needed

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m.; Chair Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk