

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 2, 2019

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 2, 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 City Administrator Fragoso, Interim Police Chief Usry, Captain Swain, Battalion Chief Hathaway and Clerk Copeland; a quorum of the Committee was present to conduct business.

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 March 4, 2019 as submitted; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Ted McKnight, 2 Shad Row, informed the Committee that a friend of his spoke with Mayor Carroll for almost two hours (2 hrs.) about his concerns relative to line of sight issues at beach accesses on the northern tip of the island, and the Mayor contradicted several statements Committee members made last month. The Mayor said that money was an issue because state funding for the beaches was dependent upon providing total public access to the beach, thus the need for a certain number of parking spaces for each beach access. The Mayor also indicated that the new hotel in Wild Dunes was going to increase traffic and produce parking issues because the resort did not have sufficient parking for this additional venue. The Mayor's solution for the problem at the 55th Avenue beach access was to widen the right-of-way which Mr. McKnight interpreted as piping the ditch and bringing in fill which would cost money, i.e. his tax money, "for something that really does not need to be done and which is going to increase traffic on top of anticipated traffic." He noted that the last beach renourishment project ended at 56th Avenue, and, without knowing how much state money was contributed to the project in that area of the beach, he liked the idea put forth at the March meeting of no parking in the area of 55th Avenue and the beach access. He hoped that something could be done before this summer season. Addressing the concept of safety on the roadways, he recounted that a friend visiting him recently was in the middle of a rear-ending trio caused by a big, raised pickup truck that ran into the back of her vehicle. She and the vehicle ahead of her were stopped due to the traffic backup that so frequently occurs on Palm, and her car sustained substantial damage. The truck was jacked-up enough that the bumper ran up and over the rear of her vehicle, resulting in the truck having no damages. He found the actions of the IOP police office very disturbing because the officer did not charge anyone, commenting that people follow too closely on Palm Boulevard and this type of accident was bound to happen. Mr. McKnight noted that riding in the truck were a small child in a car seat as well as four (4) teenagers. In the end, no charges were filed; the vehicles in the front and to the rear drove away unscathed; his friend's vehicle had to be towed and she had to rent a car. He said that many people on the island were irritated because they believe that the speed activity on the island is for revenue rather than safety. He continued that, when an officer did not charge someone who has clearly caused a major wreck, those beliefs were reinforced; he remarked that, if that was the City's policy, he hoped it would be reviewed and changed. His final issue was that

he read in the newspaper that the Public Safety Building has construction issues, was in need of substantial repairs, and that the Mayor suggested raising taxes to fix the problems.

To avoid raising taxes, Mr. McKnight suggested that, since the City provided four (4) times more parking than it was required to provide, it should halve the property at the municipal parking lot and sell the beach front property to pay for the repairs and put the balance away for future repairs. Now, with half the parking, the City could double the fees and get the same amount of revenue. He thanked the Committee for listening as he left the conference table.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to reorder the Agenda to address Item A under New Business; Chair Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of July 4th fireworks display

Interim Administrator Fragoso informed the Committee that, although the City was not required to renew, it was currently in the third year of a three-year (3 yr.) contract with Munnerlyn Pyrotechnics to produce the display for twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), and staff wanted to know the Committee's opinion about it. If the contract was to be renewed, April was the month that the City should notify the company so they can reserve a crew and produce the program.

At the March meeting, the Committee asked that staff provide a relatively accurate estimate of the total costs to the City for the fireworks display each year, and they were as follows:

• cost of the production	\$25,000
• food, staff, additional security	20,000 **
**personnel costs do not include fringes	
Total Cost	<u>\$45,000 to \$50,000</u>

2

Based on the number of people who come to the beach for the holiday, the City would incur substantial overtime costs for police and fire personnel and the additional costs of the services provided by off-duty Charleston County officers.

Chair Buckhannon said that the reason for his concern about overtime was based on the City's current staffing levels and the demand for Charleston County officers by their own department.

Captain Swain said that the Interim Administrator and Interim Police Chief met yesterday to discuss July 4th activities and personnel needs. He reported that, based on what the Police Department's staffing levels were expected to be at that time, the decision was made that the City would need four to five (4 – 5) Charleston County officers because the IOP police officers would be stretched.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to the Way and Means Committee that the City should exercise its option to renew the contact with Munnerlyn Pyrotechnics at \$25,000 for the third and final year; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Old Business

A. Presentation of Flowbird mobile app to be used to pay-to-park

Sally Donatiello, inside sales representative for Flowbird, and Andreas Jansson, Senior Vice President of Flowbird for the United States, introduced themselves; Mr. Jansson stated that Flowbird was developed about a year ago in coordination with Cale and Parkeon, the provider of the City's parking kiosks. The Flowbird headquarters are in France, and it is a worldwide company with approximately twenty-five million (25,000,000) transactions every day. Ms. Donatiello went through the steps to use the app for the Committee to see how easy it was for the visitor to use. She explained that, when the City rolls out the app initially, Flowbird would provide "ambassadors" who would be on the streets introducing visitors to the app, showing drivers how to download it, explaining what information they would now have access to and demonstrating how to use it. Additionally, they will provide flyers, stickers for the kiosks, brochures, assistance with the press release, and the presence of the ambassadors on the streets. Mr. Jansson explained that the software could be setup to require the input of license plate numbers so that the BSO only has to scan the plate and the information related to that vehicle would be available to him.

Responding to the Interim Administrator's request about pricing, Ms. Donatiello told the Committee that the use of the app would be free to the City for the transactions put through it. The only fee would be a thirty-five cent (\$0.35) transaction fee to the end user, which they would be accustomed to paying, and the City would keep ten cents (\$0.10) of that fee.

Interim Police Chief Usry stated that the Flowbird app seemed to be the best fit for the City since it already has the Parkeon kiosks. She noted that the app would also tie-in with T-2, the enforcement app currently in use. Once the City adds the license plate feature, the customer would no longer be required to put the ticket from the kiosk on the dash only to have it blow to the floor when the door closed, resulting in a ticket for "No Receipt Displayed". The Interim Chief noted that Clemson University has the Parkeon kiosks, has introduced the Flowbird app and uses it successfully.

The kiosks would remain in place so that people could continue "to feed the meter" if they wanted to.

Interim Chief Usry stated that she would like to roll out the app with the ambassadors on the streets for the Memorial Day weekend, without the plate scan feature, due to the volume of day visitors the island typically experiences.

B. Update on implementing a pay-to-park system on Palm Boulevard

Chair Buckhannon commented that this has been an ongoing item on the Agenda and that a lot of the work was in organizing the parking and learning about areas where parking regulations might need to be tweaked or changed.

Referring to Mr. McKnight's comments last month and today, the Interim Administrator reported that she reached out to Stantec about addressing his safety concerns, and they confirmed that the available parking in that area did exceed the requirement by sixty-three (63) spaces. They suggested that the City implement a fifty-foot (50 ft.) buffer on either side of the seven or eight (7 – 8) beach accesses that come out of Wild Dunes; the buffers would reduce the number of parking spaces by only twenty (20). The City has already contacted SCDOT asking what they would require the City to take this action, and they replied that, since the spaces were designated for beach parking, the City did not need to get a permit. The signs have been ordered, and the Police

Department will install them as soon as they come in. The signs will say “No Parking Here to Corner.”

1. Update on sample installation of stabilizing product

Tru Grid has told the Interim Administrator that it would provide the City with enough materials to mark four (4) parking spaces for a test; after talking with SCDOT, the City would be required to submit an engineering plan for the location chosen. Stantec has said that they could produce the engineering plan and manage the installation for two thousand dollars (\$2,000). She stated that sixty-three thousand dollars (\$63,000) remained in the budget of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) for the implementation of changes to the Beach Parking Plan; she recommended using those funds for the payment to Stantec for this project.

2. Update on Stantec feasibility study

Interim Administrator Fragoso recalled that she was tasked with asking Stantec what they would charge to do a feasibility study of the cost to the City to install the stabilizing product along the length of Palm Boulevard and how to deal with the encroachments and the palm trees. She has received that proposal in the amount of eighteen thousand eight hundred dollars (\$18,800), and she wanted to know if the Committee wanted it included in the FY20 budget. In the study, Stantec would study Palm Boulevard and provide the City with engineering plans indicating the amount of time the process would take and the changes to the rights-of-way that would be needed.

Councilmember Bell was clear that he wanted to find out if the product would meet the City’s needs before expending City funds and that he was still waiting to see the minimalist plan for parking along Palm with the minimum number of parking spaces the City was required to provide in order to receive state funds. He noted that Council had a lot of support in the community to eliminate parking on Palm Boulevard. Between the construction at Wild Dunes and the marina with its parking challenges, he predicted that this summer the City was going to see traffic backups on Palm Boulevard like it has never seen before.

The Interim Administrator said that she would prefer to have a traffic engineer make decisions about where and how many parking spaces could be eliminated. She commented that she thought Council would get feedback if, for instance, parking was allowed on one (1) block, but not on the next block or vice versa.

Chair Buckhannon suggested that parking be eliminated for fifty feet (50 ft.) on either side of every beach access path on the island.

Councilmember Bell said that he would like the next map of Palm Boulevard to show which properties were rentals and which were year-round residences.

C. Update on public transit initiative

According to the Interim Administrator, Wild Dunes, the resort, the marina and only one (1) business from Front Beach were interested in public transit based on their attendance at an early March meeting. The COG has requested layouts of the vans to understand how many people each would hold to know how many people they could transport at one (1) time; final approval from SCDOT was expected around April 18th. The place for riders to park in Mount Pleasant would be the Bi-Lo parking lot vacated recently at the corner of Highway 17 and Hungry Neck Boulevard.

D. Discussion of coyote management

Chair Buckhannon asked that the members of the Coyote Coalition join the Committee at the table, and Bob Miller of 3 Fairway Village Lane and Jillian Kerber of Hidden Green Lane came forward.

Captain Swain said that he had little news to offer from March, but that currently no traps were deployed because they were going through the cleaning process for redeployment. The Captain reported that he spoke with Jim Westerholt, the Forestry and Wildlife Chair for the Horry Georgetown Technical College, and that he explained to Captain Swain the process for his students to get an estimate of the number of coyotes on the island and noted that the best time was dusk.

When Chair Buckhannon asked what the goal was, Councilmember Bell replied that it was to get an estimate of how many coyotes were living on the island.

Bob Miller said that he agreed with the need for a count of the coyotes. He reported that he presented his information to the Wild Dunes Community Association's (WDCA) annual meeting because the Coalition saw the coyote problem as a joint venture between the City and the WDCA Board although it has not been joint enough for the Coalition.

Mrs. Kerber recalled that she has spoken to the Committee on two (2) prior occasions and to City Council. After the second incident, she reported that she received an email from Captain Swain offering to put a camera in the Kerber yard if they wanted and a call from Officer Hardy a day or so later saying that a camera had been placed near the #5 tee box. A few days later, she understood from Officer Hardy that traps were going to be set near the #5 tee box as well as the camera. A couple of weeks later she contacted Officer Hardy for an update before the Coalition meeting and did not get a response; another member of the Coalition emailed Captain Swain asking for the information on where the traps were currently deployed; she learned that no cameras were deployed and no traps were anywhere near the fifth hole. She stated that she did not feel that she was getting any support from the City or from WDCA who made it clear that they deferred to the City; in addition, she was getting conflicting information.

Captain Swain reported that no traps had been placed close to her home; he noted that they must be very selective in where the traps were deployed. The captain said that a camera was placed in her yard, but it only caught one (1) visual of a coyote.

When the Interim Administrator expressed interest in the message Mrs. Kerber received when she confronted Dave Kynoski, Mrs. Kerber said that he told her that some of the roads in Wild Dunes and the golf courses were public; therefore, they felt coyotes were an island problem that fell to the City to handle.

Mr. Miller's frustration was in full view when he said that he has heard a lot of nice words but that nothing has been done.

When Councilmember Ward suggested setting a meeting between the Public Safety Committee and the Wild Dunes Community Association (WDCA), Interim Administrator Fragoso said that she has found it difficult to set a meeting with them and that, when she reached out, no one was available. She said that she would try again to arrange a meeting with Dave Kynoski.

E. Update on beach handicap accessibility

Interim Administrator Fragoso referred the Committee to the short presentation in the meeting packet; she noted that State law allowed for the use of motorized wheelchairs or carts on South Carolina beaches. According to the City Attorney, the definition of cart would include golf carts when used by handicapped persons. Although the City Code did not have anything specifically allowing golf carts on the beach for handicap accessibility, State law and the ADA superseded the City's ordinances. Since the State law overrode the City Code, the City did not need to amend its ordinances; in addition, State law required a DMV-issued permit for the use of a golf cart and possession of a handicap placard for special exemptions, such as golf cart access to the beach. With that information in mind, she asked the Committee to decide if the City should require another layer of permitting and to issue its own decal or placard. If the Committee was inclined to amend its ordinance to be more specific than the State law, a proposed amendment was also part of the packet; the packet concludes with the approach Sullivan's Island has taken to this issue.

Interim Police Chief Usry agreed with comments about keeping the process simple; therefore, the City should follow State law, i.e. the golf cart must be registered with the State and the handicap placard must be displayed when in use on the beach.

The Committee did not make a recommendation to limit a golf cart's movements on the beach, but it did agree to proceed with the ordinance amendment in order to give officers the authority to enforce State law on the beach.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to have First Reading on an ordinance amending the City's golf cart ordinance to authorize police officers to enforce State law regarding the use of golf carts for providing handicapped accessibility to the beach; Chair Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6

F. Status of law enforcement assessment of the Police Department

The RFP for the assessment of the Police Department was answered by three (3) individuals; one (1) quote was in excess of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000+), the second quoted twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) and the third will be reviewed in the coming week. She noted that Council budgeted up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for the assessment. If the third proposal arrived prior to the Ways and Means Committee, a recommendation of an award would be made.

Councilmember Bell questioned whether to wait until the City hired a new Chief to move forward, but Interim Administrator Fragoso said that, having spoken with the persons who submitted proposals, they did not feel it was necessary. If a problem was identified, the report could be useful to the new chief.

Interim Chief Usry urged this Committee and Council to move quickly to hire the new chief; Captain Swain was going to be expected to perform three (3) jobs, i.e. Interim Chief, Captain and his job as Captain.

G. Discussion of FY20 Budget

According to the Interim Administrator, two (2) items in the Police Department budget were changed since the Committee last saw the budget, and they were (1) an increase in the cost of the police SUVs and (2) the salary range and mid-range pay adjustments approved for the Police

Department. At the budget meeting, all Councilmembers were asked to study the budget, particularly the budget(s) under the Committee(s) they served on, to recommend any changes they thought should be made and to introduce any new initiatives or projects they would like to go before the Ways and Means Committee for consideration. No one had programs, initiatives or projects to introduce, but they were most complimentary of the information provided and the manner in which it was presented at the most recent budget meeting. Councilmember Ward said, "We are, finally, on the road to taking the controversy out of the budget process."

Moving to the Fire Department budget, Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that no changes have been made since it was last reviewed.

The Interim Administrator noted that the last few pages of the full budget document show the major Capital and Special Projects the City would undertake in the FY20 budget with the proposed source(s) of funds.

5. New Business

B. Consideration of implementing a commercial film, video and photography permit fee

In an effort to streamline the approval process for requests for filming and photography on the beach, Interim Administrator Fragoso has looked at what other local governments did for small and unobtrusive projects brought to them, and she wanted to know how Council would feel about a permit application process. She said the application would be very thorough to insure that all of the City's questions and concerns would be addressed; she recalled the National Geographic filming that involved only a two (2) person crew and was noticed by only a few people. Currently they would contact a member of the City staff who would ask them to provide an overview of their project to include in the Public Safety Committee packet, and they would be asked to attend, in person or by phone, the next Committee meeting to answer questions posed by the police and/or fire personnel. Assuming the project was approved, it would be labeled a City-sponsored event; they would then be asked to attend the Ways and Means Committee meeting and the Council meeting the next week in order to obtain a final approval. The events typically have been approved, but, at times, the process can take more time than the actual project they want approved. If a permit was an idea that the Committee wanted to pursue, she would present it to Council for their feedback.

7

7. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department

Battalion Chief Hathaway took the Committee's request for a shorter report to heart and had produced a one-page report that summarized the important information from the prior month; the summary and detailed monthly reports were on the City's website.

Police Department

Captain Swain stated that he, too, was working on a one-page report. When completed, the summary and detailed reports would be posted to the City website.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Monday, May 6, 2019 in the Conference Room

8. **Executive Session** – not needed
9. **Adjournment**

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:41 a.m.;
Chair Buckhannon seconded and the motion **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk