



Public Safety Committee
9:00am, Monday, October 5, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom call due to COVID-19 Pandemic
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Council members Buckhannon, Ward, and Pounds

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Asst. Administrator Hanna, Chief Cornett, Chief Graham

2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes – September 14, 2020

Council Ward made a motion to approve, and Council Member Pounds seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

The City Clerk read into the record comments submitted to the Public Safety Committee. They can be found on the City's website alongside the agenda for this meeting.

4. Old Business

A. Update on Public Safety Building Rehabilitation Project

Administrator Fragoso said the project is still ahead of schedule and under budget. She is pleased with the progress and appreciative to the Insight Group for their work as the City's representative. Staff is working on their relocation plans now with minor, punch-list type items being finished simultaneously. Administrator Fragoso and Council Member Buckhannon encouraged the public to review project timelines as found on the City's website.

B. Discussion and update on implementation of paid parking plan on the existing public beach parking zones

Administrator Fragoso clarified that SCDOT would not support the decision made by City Council at their September meeting to permanently eliminate parking along the landside of Palm Boulevard. Those parking restrictions remain in place at the moment under the Emergency Ordinance. She added, "We are excited and eager to work with them [SCDOT] to ensure and enhance pedestrian-vehicle safety in that area because we all know that is sort of an accident waiting to happen due to the volume of cars and volume of pedestrians that are crossing the road to go to the beach."

She asked Committee members for further direction with regards to implementing paid parking “in light of SCDOT’s higher level of scrutiny over the City’s parking plan and parking regulations due to the public outcry that we have seen all summer and also the pending litigation that the City has with the Charleston Area Public Beaches Group.” She noted there are budgeted expenses involved in the implementation of paid parking and does not want to make those purchases in the event the City does not prevail in litigation.

Committee members felt it was important to continue moving forward with the implementation process but hold off on purchasing any equipment or signage until the litigation has been settled.

Administrator Fragoso pointed out “the encroachment permit still needs to be completed and submitted to SCDOT. You all know that we are working with Stantec and updating the sign plan to include the changes that have been discussed, and that work is ongoing. We have already engaged Stantec for that work and we will continue to move forward.” She added that delays in purchasing needed equipment could delay the planned spring implementation deadline.

C. Discussion of improvements to the ocean side of Palm Boulevard between 21st and 41st avenues

Council Member Buckhannon noted the problem areas on the shoulders of 35th-41st avenues. Administrator Fragoso said that the Public Works department will be doing some of the work to repair the shoulder. They have been in contact with a vendor to help with the grading in that area.

She added, “I think that this will also be part of the conversations that the City will include with SCDOT for them to understand that the paid parking program is not only meant to cover the cost of the City providing public access to the beach but also improving the right-of-ways and improving the road.” She suggested the Committee may want to consider budgeting some funds in FY22 for conceptual designs of “what those improvements would look like and also do some surveying because conceptually everything is possible, but we have some significant hurdles to get through when it comes to Palm Boulevard, mainly utility work, some drainage, and also some encroachments in the right-of-way.”

D. Update on pedestrian crosswalks and intersection safety

Administrator Fragoso reported that she and Chief Cornett have been speaking with SCDOT about the best way to make the crosswalks more visible. They are trying to identify the correct locations for crosswalks and the kind of infrastructure needed to have the crosswalks properly connect to ADA pads. She said the City is “eager and hopeful” that an agreeable solution can be found that works for both the City and SCDOT.

Chief Cornett reported that the rectangular rapid flash beacons need Federal approval. Two beacons will need to be installed at each crosswalk at the cost of \$10-15,000 for the pair. Traffic studies are needed for each area where signs are being considered.

Chief Cornett said, “We have to have a study to show that the rectangular rapid flashing beacon installation is justified based on appropriate criteria from resources and research, and that includes traffic data to include pedestrian and vehicular accounts, crash history, narrative

describing the reason for the location, and what other traffic control devices have been used to try to address those concerns in the past.” Chief Cornett will reach out to SCDOT to see what data and or studies were used to justify the crosswalks in the past to see if they can be utilized in way to support this effort.

E. Update on Front Beach loading zone and parking

Chief Cornett recommends making two of the parking spaces at the Seaside Inn and two at the Palms Hotel available for parking outside of the loading zone time of 8am-2pm. Two spots will remain loading zone spots 24/7. The cost to restripe the area would be approximately \$2,500. He added a simple wording change to the loading zone ordinance will be necessary.

After further discussion, Committee members determined they would like to see all currently reserved parking spaces on the street to become regular parking spaces outside of the 8am-2pm loading zone timeframe. Chief Cornett will get updated pricing for restriping and signage as well as a suggested location in the budget for the expense.

F. Consideration of Mutual Aid Agreements with the City of North Charleston and Town of Summerville

MOTION: Council Member Buckhannon made a motion to recommend to City Council signing the mutual aid agreements with the City of North Charleston and the Town of Summerville. Council Member Ward seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Discussion about refurbishment vs replacement of the 2003 Engine 1002

Chief Graham explained, “When we received our information for the refurb we were also handed some numbers for a replacement for a demonstration truck. The numbers were a lot less than I anticipated. As you are aware, back several years ago when we purchased the rescue truck, it came in way over what we anticipated. A replacement, if we were to go with a demo, is considerably less than what we were anticipating. The amount of \$300,000 was approved for refurbishing the 2003 pumper. The number came in at \$335,000. However, that has already expired. The replacement, if we were to go with a demo unit, if we can find one that matches our needs, we could save some money. So we are looking at right now the appraisal value of the 75-footer, which could be used as a trade-in or a down payment, we have been getting numbers, many years ago \$125,000 for a trade-in value. Then we were given \$25,000, and with the work that we had done on it, it is back up to \$51,500. Shockingly, the number for the 2003 pumper came in at \$12,000, way lower than we anticipated. We believe that if we were going to sell it outright, however, once again, we are looking at possibly putting \$335,000-\$340,000 into a truck that has an appraised value of \$12,000, which seems that it makes more sense to do some digging to make sure we are making the right choice and evaluate all six of these demos that are available.” A commitment to a demo truck would need to be made during the budget planning process, using the ladder truck as a trade-in or down payment. She suggested that a letter of intent to purchase be signed and roll the money from the FY21 budget over into the FY22

budget, then “re-budget the difference.” The new truck would come with a full warranty on some parts.

She added, “With a refurb, it is still not a bad idea, but with refurbishing about a one year warranty, so we are talking about a \$200,00 difference to have a truck that is going to continue to service well with a one-year warranty versus a truck that is going to be built to current specs that is going to last with a warranty of 20 years on some parts and 6 on others.”

She and other fire personnel will continue to research the best option for the City.

5. **New Business**

A. **Discussion of golf cart regulations and safety**

Chief Cornett said the police department is working on addressing those golf carts that are not properly registered and following State law. He also said the code enforcement officer has reached out to those off-island golf cart rental companies to educate them about the that State statute says you can only operate a golf cart within four miles of the registered address. The only exception to that is people who live in a gated community can operate a golf cart within four miles of the gate. Chief Cornett further clarified this restriction relates to golf carts and not LSVs. He also said that they do receive a number of complaints about underage drivers and have begun addressing that as well.

Administrator Fragoso shared that everyone registering for the Halloween Golf Cart Parade must provide their registration number in order to participate, which may help in making people aware of the need to register their golf carts with the City. There is a golf cart registration form available on the City’s website.

B. **Consideration of recommendation for the Signal 30 award**

Chief Graham shared, “We have an island resident who was not home. However, his disabled relative was. Their generator caught on fire, and Terry McKenzie of the Water Company just happened to be in the area, darted over, put the fire out, and went and shut the gas off. The homeowner truly believes that had this not happened, the fire would have extended to the house before the Fire Department arrived, and he would highly recommend that we consider Terry McKenzie, who we all know and love, for the Signal 30 Award.”

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to approve that recommendation, and Council Member Pounds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. **Discussion and consideration of changes to the Alarm Ordinance**

Chief Cornett said the City ordinance addressing home alarms requires homeowners to register their alarm with the City. He feels this could discourage some people from having alarms installed. He also said the staff spends considerable time notifying those who have registered to update their permits.

Committee members asked Chief Cornett to discuss the needed wording changes with the City attorney for Council consideration later this month.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

A. Fire Department – Chief Graham

Chief Graham reported that staff continues to monitor COVID-19 and keep their PPE supplies full. The staff has begun to transition back into the Public Safety Building.

She shared a letter of gratitude sent by an island resident for Battalion Chief Smith and Firefighter John Susgenauk “who went down and assisted a resident with a washing machine that was full of water and he was not able to get it out. Very, very thankful.”

The budgeted replacement radios are now on the trucks. These radios will now be programmable over the air instead of needing to be taken to a shop for updates.

Staff has also made revisions to the Standard Operating Guidelines General Orders and Standards of Care. Battalion Chief Hathaway has completed an improved version of the Probationary Firefighter Handbook the Driver Operator Handbook, and the Aerial Handbook. He is working on a Watercraft Handbook. She reported on a recent watercraft in distress call and a response to a person in full cardiac arrest.

B. Police Department – Chief Cornett

Chief Cornett commended those who responded to the call for the full cardiac arrest. He reported there were 1,243 calls for service in September and 89 incident reports with 131 charges filed. Total DUIs are still going up with 9 arrests in September. There were also 348 traffic stops, many in response to complaints around the island.

He said there are two officers on the way to Columbia to pick up a mobile kitchen trailer from the Federal surplus program that could be used during a storm. He also shared that they have filed grant applications for two Polaris beach vehicles, a trailer, and a digital billboard sign. It is a fully-funded grant, so no matching funds are needed.

The BSO truck has been ordered and will be available for pickup in about 90 days.

8. Miscellaneous Business

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be Monday, November 2, 2020 at 9am.

9. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Pounds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk