



Public Safety Committee
3:00pm, Thursday, July 1, 2021
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC
and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Council members Bell, Pounds, and Ward

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Chief Cornett, Deputy Chief Hathaway, Lieutenant Forsythe, Fire Marshall Stafford

2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2021 meeting, and Council Member Pounds seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

4. Highlights of Departmental Reports

A. Fire Department – Deputy Chief Hathaway

Deputy Chief Hathaway reported there were 112 calls for service in June, which is down 6% from June 2020. He reviewed the incidents from June, noting the Fire Department did have trouble accessing one accident on the Connector due to stopped traffic.

Fire Marshall Travis Stafford shared details of the Fire Safe South Carolina Community Award given to the IOP Fire Department for 2020, one of only 80 departments in the state to receive it. Departments must achieve 14 goals throughout the year to be eligible for the annual award.

B. Police Department – Chief Cornett

Chief Cornett reviewed the stats for incidents in June, noting they may change slightly after he has had the chance to review them more closely. There were 1,100 calls for service, 10 DUI arrests, 1,057 parking tickets issued.

Four officers were recognized last month with the Bronze DUI Hero Award for their work in enforcing DUI laws and Officer Tuminelli was recognized as Employee of the Quarter.

Chief Cornett shared a new graph detailing staffing vacancies, noting the department is down 4 people, which is an 18% vacancy rate. He said staffing vacancies in police departments are a nationwide issue.

5. Old Business

A. Update on CARTA's Beach Shuttle between Isle of Palms and Mt. Pleasant

Administrator Fragoso reported on a recent meeting with CARTA staff to discuss alternative routes and drop offs for the Beach Shuttle. She said they found one viable alternative “that would require a change in the police department traffic operations on Front Beach during the weekends where they block some of the access to ensure that people are turning right rather than turning left onto Ocean Boulevard.” She added, “If the goal is to relocate the route to the Front Beach some of the concerns that have been expressed by Fire and Police is just heightening and increasing traffic in that area. That is something we are going to have to monitor.”

The alternative route “would have the bus turning right at the end of the Connector, then left onto JC Long, then Pavilion and then onto Ocean Boulevard and creating that loop, exiting through 14th Avenue. That final section of Ocean Boulevard is where the only dedicated fire lane is located so there is a potential concern about traffic and the need for emergency personnel, emergency equipment to make their way to Ocean Boulevard in the event of an emergency.”

Chief Cornett stated, “I’m just going to be on record stating that I do believe this is going to increase traffic congestion in that area, and it could potentially do it more significant than we are thinking. It is not just the bus. We cone that off every weekend to keep traffic flowing. Otherwise, people try to turn around all those islands. So we’re going to open that and that will increase all that traffic. It will increase congestion in that area, which will impact potential emergency response in those areas.”

Council Member Ward suggested that Council look at reconfiguring that area for better traffic flow. He also said that CARTA could install covered bus stops if the beach shuttle proves successful.

Administrator Fragoso pointed out that drivers on Ocean Boulevard should expect 3-5 minute stops for the bus depending on how many people use the shuttle. She said, “We just want to be on record stating that we will try this alternative location. The CARTA folks indicated they would need several weeks to update all of the materials and train personnel, the drivers to make this new route.”

She added that an email from the Executive Director of CCPRC indicates that they will not be altering how they receive payment at the County Park as it does not benefit them to do so. CCPRC indicated that long-term they are looking at a software option allowing people to pay via kiosk inside the lot. Council Member Bell said he would like for the City Council to discuss this issue further to find a solution that works for both the City and County.

B. Discussion of dog leash rules and enforcement

Committee members discussed how to strength animal control ordinances without enacting a stricter leash law. Council Member Ward suggested staff draft language for the Committee to review next month. Chief Cornett would like to hire the new Animal Control Officer and seek recommendations from that person as to how best handle dog incidents on the island.

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to set the minimum fine for animal control offenses at \$500 at the discretion of the officer as defined by State statute. Council Member Pounds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of unregulated and unsigned right of way parking

Committee members discussed with Administrator Fragoso and Chief Cornett the confusion around the unsigned and unregulated parking area near the Post Office. Administrator Fragoso and Chief Cornett suggested better signage in the area to be clear as to what spots belong to the City and which belong to the Post Office. Administrator Fragoso expressed concern about marking an area that would encourage people to park in such a small space. Staff will communicate with the towing company which spaces belong to the City so that cars are not towed from those spaces.

B. Discussion of Beach Service Officers' (BSOs) roles, responsibilities, and community expectations

Chief Cornett said recent concerns about BSOs have been addressed. He reviewed the responsibilities of BSOs, which includes writing parking tickets and violations for beach-related offenses. Council Member Bell suggested that the Marina needs additional BSO presence.

C. Discussion and consideration of installing a stop sign at the intersection of 41st Avenue and Wildwood Road/Forest Trail

Council Member Bell expressed concern about the traffic speeds at this intersection and wondered if a stop sign will help when the Marina restaurant is opened. Council Member Pounds noted that speeding is an islandwide issue that needs more discussion.

MOTION: Council Member Bell made a motion to approve the request to install a stop sign at 41st Avenue for a trial period of 90 days. Council Member Ward seconded the motion.

Administrator Fragoso stated that earlier requests for such a stop sign have been denied. Chief Cornett said he had a conversation with a SCDOT representative who expressed concern about having two stop signs so close to each other in that area.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion of speeding issues on the avenues and consideration of reducing the speed limit on the interior streets

In response to resident complaints about speeding on side streets, Administrator Fragoso asked if City Council should consider lowering the speed limit. She said it is 30mph on the residential streets but is not posted. Any changes to signs or the addition of signs must be approved by SCDOT. Committee members suggested a few signs indicating an islandwide speed unless otherwise posted.

Chief Cornett said he has been communicating the department's efforts and intention of stronger traffic enforcement on the side streets in recent interviews.

E. Update and discussion of study of the modifications to the IOP Connector

Administrator Fragoso clarified that City Council voted to engage a traffic engineer to review the recent modifications to the IOP Connector and represent the City in discussions with SCDOT and other stakeholders regarding potential solutions to address traffic congestion. There was no discussion about a traffic study. She pointed out that finding a neutral third party to participate in such an effort has proven very difficult.

F. Discussion and presentation of Tru-Grid material for right-of-way parking areas

Administrator Fragoso said that while Tru-Grid is offering to provide free installation of four parking spaces' worth of material as a test run, the actual cost to put this on all of Palm Boulevard is \$8-\$11/square foot. Staff will continue to look at other options to make this area more aesthetically pleasing. Council Member Bell said a broader and more cooperative plan with SCDOT to beautify the area is said needed.

G. Discussion about law enforcement assistance from Charleston County Sheriff's Office and State Highway Patrol

Chief Cornett stated the IOP Police Department has strong relationships with all outside agencies and receives assistance as needed and when requested from the State Highway Patrol, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, and the Mt. Pleasant Police Department.

H. Discussion of challenges with the pedestrian median on Front Beach, Ocean Boulevard between 10th and 14th avenues

Noting the issues mentioned earlier in the meeting, Committee members directed staff to study possible changes to the area and bring back options and costs for adjusting the pedestrian median at the Front Beach.

7. Miscellaneous Business

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be on Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 3:00pm.

8. 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 5:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk