



EMERGENCY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
12:00pm, Saturday April 8, 2023
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 Hahn, Bogosian, Ward, Streetman, Anderson, Popson (via phone), Miars, Pierce, and Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Chief Cornett, Chief Oliverius

2. Purpose – Discussion and updates from the law enforcement incident on the beach on Friday, April 7, 2023

Mayor Pounds: Just a couple of quick comments before we turn it over to Chief and Chief for comments. Being here, I am repeating a little bit of what I said at the press conference just a moment ago. Way too many times an unprepared, untrained elected official sitting in front of a camera with not really knowing what to do in situations like this, and that is unfortunate for our country, for folks that get injured, that watching our staff last night and the coordination of the tri-county area was really something unbelievable. If you were around in the area, I don't know, Chief or Chief, a hundred cars, a couple hundred personnel, from all over the tri-county area. And I know there is a lot of supplication and a lot of social media news out there, and I would just say let's get the facts on the table and deal with it before we start talking suggestions and changes and tweaks. I think when you hear from our Chief, you will be pleased with what has happened and the proactiveness that was there. Again, I was just very impressed with our Public Safety folks, our staff, as well as the coordination of the tri-county area. The other thing that I was really impressed with is our business community on the island. Unbelievable the way they stepped up and provided food for our folks all night and this morning still going on. Just really appreciative of the efforts of our local business community and our residents, too. They continue to support our Public Safety folks in a great way. So Chief Cornett, I will just turn it to you and let you give us an update, please.

Chief Cornett: Certainly. So yesterday morning, we were made aware of an incident, or made aware of a skip day that was going to take place on the beach. And as soon as we found out that we were going to have that on our beach, we notified Charleston County Sheriff's Office, and they did send resources, even more resources than I initially thought that were out here. They were definitely out here. We had extra personnel. We were already planning, knowing that Spring Break was coming. So we had already planned to bring extra police officers in from our

agency as well as the Sheriff's Office. Once we found we had this, the Sheriff's Office sent even more than we had initially planned to do for Spring Break.

"We had officers on the beach and they were dealing with two separate fights. They initially detained three individuals from one fight, and while they were doing that, a second fight took place, and while they were detaining an individual with that one, someone did start shooting into the crowd. We had six victims, and their ages are 16 and 15. One that is in her 30s, mid-30s. We did detain two individuals that were coming off of the beach, and those two individuals were subsequently arrested. We have not been able to say that they were involved in the incident on the beach. We are still investigating their involvement, but we do know that they had firearms, and they were both arrested for having those firearms. One was a juvenile, 16 years old, who was arrested and charged with unlawful carry of a firearm and possession of a stolen firearm. The other one was an 18-year-old individual who was charged with unlawful carry of a firearm.

"Once we, the crowd actually started to get big, and so we called for additional resources to address it the same way we normally would to push them off of the beach, and that is when the shooting took place. Just before those agencies started to arrive. That would have been around 5:27ish yesterday evening. Once they came off the beach, we started to secure the crime scene on the beach and close the beach between Sea Cabins and County Park. And at the same time, we were removing the individuals out of our parking lots and off of the island, I do know that traffic was backed up on the Connector trying to leave. Coming onto the island, traffic was backed up due to a collision on the opposite side, the Mt. Pleasant side, involving Port City EMS.

"Make sure I cover all my notes here. We did recover two firearms as I already mentioned with the two individuals that we arrested. One thing that I want to point out is that when I started looking at our video last night from our officers' responses, I was amazed at their courage. They had individuals detained in handcuffs, and the moment the shooting started, they were putting people on the ground behind, the same people they had handcuffed, were being put on the ground behind cover, and they were getting on top of them in an effort to keep them from being injured. As they were releasing them to turn to the bigger threat, which was the individual that was discharging, two of our officers without hesitation sprinted towards the gunfire where it was taking place. Unfortunately, with the crowd being as big as it was, they were not able to identify who that shooter was. As soon as that crowd was leaving and there was not a danger, they turned and immediately went to rendering aid to individuals who had been shot.

"Within three minutes, I would say, roughly three minutes, they had three individuals that had been injured loaded on the back of one of our Polaris vehicles and transported out where Fire was already waiting. They got there before we even had to call them. They were there ready to render aid and to start helping these individuals. We had other individuals that self-transported to the hospital. That is how we have a total of six. We transported four from the island. Is that correct, Chief?

Chief Oliverius: Correct. Six.

Chief Cornett: Six. And some of those, one is still in the hospital. All the others have been released. They were non-life-threatening injuries for all of them.

“I do want to say when we initially had the incident, we called for assistance, and our assistance came from Charleston County Sheriff’s Office, Charleston City Police Department, Mt. Pleasant Police Department, Sullivan’s Island Police Department, North Charleston Police Department, Berkeley County Sheriff’s Office, Summerville Police Department, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, the FBI, ATF, Isle of Palms Fire Department, Mt. Pleasant Fire Department, Charleston County EMS, Port City EMS, Charleston County Emergency Management Division, and Charleston County Dispatch all played a critical role in our response. We closed 14th Avenue and used the County Park as a staging area for all responding law enforcement agencies so that we could assign them and direct them where they needed to be to address the incident.

“We do have a tip line. Emergency Management assisted us with getting that set up. That tip line that we have got out if you want it just so you have it is 843-529-3750. And we are asking anybody with any information to call that tip line. We have it staffed with our personnel as well as personnel from our surrounding agencies. They are staffing those phone lines as well at the Emergency Management Division.”

Mayor Pounds: Chief Oliverius, anything to add?

Chief Oliverius: No, sir. Chief Cornett covered it. I just want to reiterate the partnership that we have with our neighboring communities and how crucial that was to the outcome of what we had yesterday. Those relationships and partnerships are so important, as you all well know, and so we definitely leaned on those partners and leveraged that, and our firefighters did an amazing job, as Chief Cornett said, working in conjunction with Charleston County EMS, Port City, and with the Police Department as they rendered aid first.

Chief Cornett: If I could, Mayor, I just want to point out we are still investigating what took place. We have several investigators from the surrounding tri-county area that are assisting in that as well as SLED. I spoke with Chief Keel earlier this morning and has promised whatever resources we need we will have. As well as the FBI has promised the same thing. So they have all sent personnel to assist us with the investigation, and that could be doing interviews and whatever else we need to do.

Administrator Fragoso: I just want to reiterate the support that we received from the automatic and mutual aid agreements that we have with neighboring communities. The outpour of support has been significant, and we saw it play out in an incident where we never hoped we’d have, but certainly saw that pretty beautifully.

Mayor Pounds: I will open it up for Council questions. Rusty.

Council Member Streetman: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Chief Cornett partially answered my question. Talking about you have several investigators that are looking into this from SLED and all different agencies. Who actually takes the lead? Who is leading that investigation now?

Chief Cornett: We are the lead investigating agency, and the FBI, SLED, and the other surrounding agencies are assisting us because there are just so many people that we need to

interview. So many different pieces of evidence that we need to process. They are all going to assist us. It takes a lot of people to work on this.

Council Member Streetman: Okay. The other thing that I want to say, Mayor, just very quickly at this point, is based on all the video I have seen, based on the press conference this morning, what I have heard, what I have seen, I want to personally thank all of our Public Safety and all of the other agencies that helped you all and helped all of us on the island. This is a traumatic thing for all of us, being on the side of we are not accustomed to things like this happening. But it appears to me, at first glimpse, it was really all hands on deck, and people rallied around making sure we protected as many residents, citizens, off-islanders as we could. Thank goodness none of our first responders got significantly injured in the process either. Thank you.

Council Member Bogosian: Yeah, I was down there last night on my walk down. And while I was down there, it was certainly an IOP that was unrecognizable to me. It reminded me something more like the videos I saw coming out of Miami Beach spring break and the chaos there. Not to repeat myself and what has already been said, I was extremely impressed with the support we received from everywhere. From Federal and all the State agencies, local municipalities, and how well coordinated it was. So I commend you, Chief, for coordinating that effort because it was a massive coordination of different things going on. At one point, the bridge was actually being barricaded or blocked by individuals and the response to that. And just things popping up all over the place. As I was walking the parking lot, there was still a lot of activity going on where there were illegal guns and other arrests going on, well after that was going on. So it was chaos. So I commend you. I commend the Fire Department. I commend all those that helped get us through last night, and I am sure we will have a debrief and rethink as the emergency gets through on things that we could have done differently. And find a way, I did not realize the bravery that was displayed by our police department, but I think we should find a way to recognize those at some point going forward as well. So thanks again.

Council Member Ward: Are you at liberty to say if you know do you think it is a shooter or plural?

Chief Cornett: We don't know right now. We are still trying to get all those interviews done, and right now, you have conflicting stories. So once we finish all those, we will be able to put together a timeline and have a more accurate picture of what took place.

Council Member Anderson: I would like to thank you for the extraordinary job you all did last night. This could have been far worse than it was, and we are fortunate that there was no one with serious injuries, and certainly nothing beyond that that happened. And the size of the group that was on the beach, it's pretty impressive that that is all that happened. One more thing I would like for you to just sort of elaborate on, Chief, you mentioned the tip line. Why don't you tell us a little bit about what kind of tips you would like to have called in?

Chief Cornett: So with tip line, anything you think you saw, whether you think it is small or you think it is huge, call. That little piece of information that you think might be irrelevant may be a crucial part to help us identify the individual involved. If you have video, Ring doorbell video, Nest videos, house security videos, we are asking that you contact us so that we can collect that.

Regardless of how small you think that video might be, again, it may be the most critical component to helping us with this investigation. So anything you have, call us. Call us and share that.

Mayor Pounds: Scott, anything? Kevin. I know Kevin is on the phone. Kevin, anything?

Council Member Popson: Thanks, Mr. Mayor. No just kind of repeat I am glad that our fire safety folks are safe and chiefs, just thank you for the excellent effort by you both and your team. I am just glad everybody is safe.

Mayor Pounds: Desiree, anything else?

Administrator Fragoso: Well, clearly after situations like this, we will need to have a time to discuss what additional resources and strategies we may need to implement in the future to avoid this from happening. It is certainly unacceptable. I do agree with the comment that Council Member Bogosian made. It was an unrecognizable IOP for me. And I noticed crowds of people that were undeterred, even with the significant presence of police on the island when we were trying to clear it out. We are going to have to have serious conversations about access and gatherings on the beach. We could have had a much different situation. Our officers were on the beach when the shooting happened, and I am so glad that none of them were injured, and we will take this very seriously. Absolutely. And it will be hard decisions and hard conversations to have.

Mayor Pounds: And Chief, I know we have our municipal lots are closed today. County Park lot is open at this point. Is that correct?

Chief Cornett: That is correct, yes, sir.

Mayor Pounds: We will do that for the foreseeable future at this point.

Chief Cornett: Yes, sir.

Mayor Pounds: And we will take all the flack that comes with that. That is the decision to make right now for that purpose.

3. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:14pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk