

**City Council  
Public Hearing**

5:45 p.m., Tuesday, May 24, 2016

The City Council Public Hearing was held at 5:45 p.m., Tuesday, May 24, 2016 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the Public Hearing were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Bettelli, Carroll, Ferencz, Harrington, Rice and Ward, Mayor Cronin, Administrator Tucker, Attorney Halversen, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. Councilmember Kinghorn's absence was excused.

1. Mayor Cronin called the hearing to order and acknowledged that the press and public had been duly notified of the hearing in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. **Purpose**

**ORDINANCE 2016-05 – An Ordinance to raise revenue and adopt a budget for the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016, and ending June 30, 2017.**

Initiating her comments, Administrator Tucker thanked the Department Managers, the Mayor and City Council for their hard work over the past four (4) months to reach the point of ratification at this meeting; she expressed special thanks to Treasurer Suggs for her skill, patience and generosity for the past months.

Describing how the budget document is arranged, the Administrator stated that the first few pages are the fund balance schedules, which are useful tools for Council and staff because they show how the City expects to end FY16, then the numbers for the FY17 budget are added in to project FY17 results in each of the City's funds. These schedules are followed by estimated FY17 General Fund revenues and the General Fund expenditure; revenues and expenditures for the Capital Projects Fund, the tourism revenue and expenditures; the Disaster Recovery Fund, the Marina Fund revenue and expenditures, then the Capital Projects and debt service with the sources of funds to cover them. The final pages are made up of the updated ten-year (10 yr.) Capital Plan.

The best thing about this version of the budget is that it does not contain any kind of tax increase. The major work initiatives for the FY17 budget are as follows:

- Approximately one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in savings toward the future purchases of capital assets, like garbage trucks and fire apparatus;
- Several initiatives related to storm recovery, including income and expenses since some of the funds will come from grants for which the City has a twenty-five percent (25%) local share; Other related expenses are an emergency generator for the Recreation Center and drainage assessments and improvements;
- The replacement of underground storage tanks at two (2) facilities, i.e. the marina and the Public Works site, a total of eight (8) tanks at approximately eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000);
- Replacement of lighting at the soccer fields for about one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000);

- Design initiatives for two (2) projects, i.e. marina redevelopment and the public restrooms, for a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000);
- Assembling funds for a major beach renourishment project likely in the winter of 2017, if all of the pieces come together through the pursuit of grants and public and private funds with the City's share being two million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$2,800,000);
- Increases in the parking rates for the parking meters and parking lots are expected to generate approximately three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in additional General Fund revenue;
- Transfers-in from tourism funds to support City operations are consistent with prior years, i.e. the tourism impact for Public Works, Police and Fire Departments.
- Three (3) new positions are being funded from the General Fund – two (2) additional police officers and a payroll/human resources position; additionally taking one part-time employee to full-time; and
- Re-budgets from prior years include NPDES compliance at Public Works site, court security system, financial software, and the Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan.

Other initiatives included in the FY17 budget include:

- Twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) for an assessment of the City's buildings to serve as a budgeting guide for the future maintenance needs of them;
- Expand the City's video surveillance with cameras installed in the municipal parking lots for approximately five thousand dollars (\$5,000);
- Thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) for "secret season" promotion to level out the island's tourism in the "shoulder" seasons of the summer;
- Twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000) to reduce the amount of paper by furthering the City's goal of being "paperless;" and
- Approximately ninety-two thousand dollars (\$92,000) for a golf cart path on Palm Boulevard between 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the Island Center.

Patricia Ryan, 6 Forest Trail Court 1, said that she has personally reviewed the FY17 budget and has attended the meetings to hear Council's discussion; she voiced concern that the budget does not include any funding for the Disaster Recovery Fund. Living in New York when Hurricane Hugo hit the island, the Isle of Palms was given ample coverage by the twenty-four (24) hour news service. She opined that the money in the fund "should be considered sacred and should be added to." She stated that, in the event of another hurricane disaster, FEMA would not arrive for five to seven (5-7) days, and, in the interim, the City would have to fend for itself; she stated that the money the City has accrued might last a day or a day and a half. She commented that the City's number one responsibility was the residents of the island; therefore, she indicated that Council has not addressed the Disaster Recovery Fund appropriately. If the City were to be impacted by a smaller hurricane, it would dramatically influence tourism and the tourism funds that are paying for the City's debt. If that were to happen, the matter of paying for that debt would fall to the residents. She stated that she finds it hard to comprehend that an island would be so under-funded in the Disaster Recovery Fund.

Ms. Ryan also noted that the marina was “dear to her heart” and she had supported the referendum to buy it to save it from developers, and now Council is turning it over to those same developers. For residents to go there, they must pay for parking. She questioned that the developers would try to turn the marina into another Kiawah or Hilton Head; she stated that the residents had voted to keep it the way it is with reasonable maintenance. She also questioned that the City was going to build another boat ramp when the existing ramp has another twenty (20) years of useful life.

Ms. Ryan concluded that “some people have forgotten what this island is, and that there are residents who live here and we vote you in to take care of us first, and that seems to be sorely lacking.”

Joan Berger stated that she had sent Council an email last week about the parking where she is building her house on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Administrator Tucker reported that the Police Chief and the Director of the Building Department were working to resolve the issue; she assured Ms. Berger that the City was working to resolve the issue for her and others who were building on the island.

### **3. Adjournment**

With no further comments, Mayor Cronin closed the hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk