



**Administration Committee Meeting
10:00am, Wednesday, March 5, 2025
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 Bogosian, Carroll, and Ward

Staff Present: Director Kerr, HR Officer Ladd, Director Hamilton

Also present: Chris Jordan, General Manager, IOP Water & Sewer Commission, Linda Tucker

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to the minutes of the February 4, 2025 meeting. Council Member Bogosian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to suspend the rules of order to reorder the agenda and allow for the interviews of the federal lobbyists outside of Executive Session. Council Member Bogosian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Interview of firms for Federal Lobbyist

Roger Glenn, Charmaine Anderson, and Lane Dixon of the Ferguson Group gave an overview of the services they can provide to the City and the Water & Sewer Commission. They currently work for the Town of Mt. Pleasant and several other municipalities in South Carolina and believe these already-established connections in the State will help their work on the Isle of Palms. They explained their work process to the Committee. Mr. Dixon said they specialize in water/stormwater/coastal protections. Mr. Glenn highlighted the expertise of the rest of the firm, adding that the City and the Commission will have full access to their staff.

Ms. Tucker asked numerous questions including any past missteps they have learned from, if they have any other joint clients such as the City and the Water & Sewer Commission, about their staff in South Carolina, how they track their success, how long until they might see an ROI should they hire the Ferguson Group, and some specific questions related to their bid.

Mr. Glenn said the City should be willing to make a two-year commitment "because it's going to take a little bit of time to get started, and to get that return. I mean, historically, we've seen more than 10 times the return on the investment that's been made over a two-year period. In these

services through a combination of congressionally-directed spending and or competitive grant funding, but we strive for a much higher rate of return.”

Ms. Anderson added their intent is to be “good stewards of the community” and to be “part of the community.”

Mr. Glenn said while it is important to have a powerful legislative delegation, they view themselves as an extension of City/WSC staff. “What we’re going to do is help you identify opportunities for funding that where they can help you and give you and help you organize the requests in such a way that it will be something that they will be receptive to and that they can actually act on.”

Jim Davenport, Chas Thomas, Jordan Marsh, and Carmen Ojeda of Thorn Run Partners then gave an overview of the services they can provide to the City and the Water & Sewer Commission. Mr. Davenport elaborated on their work process, describing them as a “boutique” lobbying firm. He said about 25% of their clients are local governments. They have secured \$2.1 billion for their clients in the last three years through a “multi-pronged approach.” They help their clients prepare and submit comments to federal actions, develop and expand relationships with their congressional delegation, and help governments move their agendas forward. Mr. Marsh added that they match up their clients’ priorities with available funding.

They highlighted their relationship with Senator Graham’s office.

Ms. Tucker asked several questions of this group as well including their specific successes, the possibility of the City securing reimbursement for beach renourishment, a septic-to-sewer program, how they would manage dealing with two entities with slightly different priorities, how they handle the upheaval within the federal agencies, additional travel expenses, and their projected ROI.

Mr. Davenport also said it would be 1.5-2 years before they would see any return on investment.

Council Member Bogosian asked for an explanation of what is included in their fee. Mr. Davenport explained that their fee does not include grant writing, but they will edit and review whatever is submitted to them. They will secure meetings with program officers and get letters of support from the congressional delegation. In the event a grant is not awarded, they will secure a debrief so the next attempt will be more successful.

Committee members, Ms. Tucker, and General Manager Jordan discussed the firms, their responses, and their fee schedule. Council Member Carroll noted one difference is the inclusion of grant writing. Several members noted that they are both well qualified, but there is a big difference in their fees. Director Kerr will reach out to Thorn Run Partners about including grant writing in their proposal. The matter will be brought to the City Council workshop, then come back to the Committee for a final recommendation at their April meeting.

4. Election of Vice Chair

Council Member Ward asked Council Member Bogosian if he would consider an election of Chair and Vice Chair at the April meeting in light of the fact that Council Member Bogosian is

already Chair of the Public Safety Committee. Council Member Bogosian, as elected Vice Chair, was to become Chair of the Committee following Mayor Pounds's departure from the committee. Council Member Bogosian agreed to such an election process, and it will be on the April agenda.

5. **Old Business -- none**

6. **New Business**

a. **Review of FY 26 10-year Capital Plan for General Government and Building Department**

Director Hamilton pointed out the \$100,000 that will be carried over from FY25 for the drainage project at Forest Trails and the \$250,000 (\$125,000 from each budget) to reconfigure the second floor of City Hall to accommodate additional office space and additional building maintenance until City Council makes a decision about a new City Hall.

b. **Review of FY26 Operational Budget for General Government and Building Department**

Director Hamilton said the biggest change in the operational budget for General Government includes the salaries of the Financial Analyst and Beach/Resilience staff member as well as increased salaries for the City Administrator and Deputy City Administrator.

Discussion ensued about the debt service payments in this budget and other additions to the budget including \$10,000 for the election, the single audit needed for grant monies, the hanging of the holiday wreaths, an increase in the judges' salaries for an additional court for parking, and increased legal fees. Director Hamilton said the fees for the Federal Lobbyist will need to be added to the budget.

c. **Discuss developing a means to show appreciation for prior long serving City Council members**

Council Member Ward suggested developing a means of recognition for those who have served on City Council for multiple terms. He will create some guidelines for such a process and bring them to the next meeting.

7. **Miscellaneous Business**

The next meeting of the Administration Committee will be on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 1:00pm.

8. **Adjournment**

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Carroll seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk