

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m., Monday, September 12, 2016

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m., Monday, September 12, 2016 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Police Chief Buckhannon, Fire Chief Graham, Assistant Administrator Frago and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bettelli called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 4, 2016 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

4. **Old Business**

A. Discussion of encroachments on rights-of-way

Chief Buckhannon stated that there are areas of the island where right-of-way encroachments cause parking issues, and, with the season winding down, he was prepared to begin identifying the encroachments that interfere with parking or create a safety hazard to start the removal process before the next beach season. He indicated that he would address the safety hazards, i.e. the hard structures, first.

On the subject of parking, Councilmember Bergwerf reported that she has received a few emails from residents who "applauded" the parking plan; people enjoyed getting their neighborhoods back.

Chair Bettelli questioned that island residents really understand the parking plan, and many non-residents have the perception that the City is trying to stop people from getting to the beach.

Councilmember Bergwerf indicated that something needs to be done to make residents aware that they can park in the municipal parking lots for free with proper vehicle credentials.

Chair Bettelli expressed the opinion that the October special meeting about parking should be an educational tool for residents.

Assistant Frago stated that the parking special meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 17th at 6:00 p.m.

B. Updates related to Coyotes

Chief Buckhannon stated that the City has not had many sightings or people have decided not to report them.

Councilmember Carroll asked what had happened with the idea of clearing the heavily wooded vacant lots on the island.

Chief Buckhannon said that they address heavily vegetated lots when a complaint is filed; he added that, if there is a heavily wooded lot in an area where the Department is getting a lot of coyote sightings, they will work with the property owner to get the lot cleared.

C. Discussion of Storm Warning Preparedness

Chair Bettelli said that he thought the City had a good method for preparing for storms.

At the Fire Department, all personnel are notified to make sure that they are aware of the threat and to ensure that they make the necessary personal preparations in case they are required to report to the island; some personnel will volunteer to come back to the island to help with storm prep. If the Department had to evacuate, there are designated locations throughout the county. Personnel also ensure that all equipment is ready and operational. Persons who have pre-registered for assistance in a severe weather event are all contacted; currently about twenty-five or thirty (25-30) residents are on the list. Chief Graham said that this program is promoted at the Disaster Expo every year; information is also on the City's website. In anticipation of rip currents and water rescues, the Department will increase the number of personnel on duty for a couple of days before and after the storm event.

The Committee agreed that the things the City does to prepare for a weather event should be promoted in the local newspapers when there is no threat; seeing that information might spur some residents to prepare ahead and not to wait until the last minute.

Chief Graham stated that she was not a proponent of rip current flags based on the fear of missing a location or miss hoisting them by a day. If the City were to ever go to a digital messaging format, to have the information running along the bottom would get people's attention. If there are sufficient personnel and an ATV can get on the beach, personnel ride up and down the beach assessing the situation and keeping an eye on people who would likely get in the water, such as surfers.

5. New Business

Impacts of Hermine

Assistant Fragoso announced that the City had sustained no damage from Hermine; City offices were closed on Friday at 1:30 p.m. due to increasing winds to ensure the safety of personnel leaving the island. The City also followed Charleston County's lead relative to preparation.

Chief Graham noted that there had been one (1) significant lightning strike in Wild Dunes and trees down on a power line, as well as other smaller electrical issues.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

On August 12th, personnel assisted the Dewees Island Fire Department by transporting a paramedic to the island; on two (2) occasions, August 14th and August 26th, personnel helped to get people out of elevators stuck between floors. Crews found fire and black smoke coming from a structure fire on Charleston Boulevard on August 28th; once the fire was extinguished, personnel completed salvage, overhaul and cause and origin investigation. It was thought that the cause of the fire was probably electrical, and personnel were able to save the structure.

Personnel responded to a total of one hundred sixteen (116) calls in the month; fifty (50) of them were EMS calls. Personnel responded to a total of seven hundred ninety-five (795) calls year-to-date.

Chief Graham reported that the island may lose the presence of the QRV; staff will monitor its use and provide feedback to Charleston County. If that happens, the County's goal is to get the island a quicker transport unit.

The Chief reported that there has been a change of command at the County, and re-vamping has occurred throughout the system. They have hired additional personnel with the plan to get a transport vehicle closer to the island.

Thirteen (13) pre-incident surveys were done along with thirteen (13) fire inspections where they found one hundred forty-four (144) violations.

All personnel received training on response protocols, equipment familiarization, firefighter safety, and inspections and investigations. There were no out-of-the-ordinary vehicle maintenance issues in August; the annual service agreements on the defibrillators was the largest expense. During the month, the Department had its annual Insurance Service Office (ISO) evaluation; and Chief Graham expects to get good results. Personnel conducted several station tours, removed a tree from a residence on 34th Avenue, installed car seats and assisted an elderly resident on Waterway Boulevard up the stairs to their home.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

Although the season is winding down, August was a busy month. On Wednesday, August 24th a burglary occurred where the home owner's iPad remote that the owner uses to control his security system was stolen. Over the following week or week and a half, a woman from Spartanburg visited and broke into six (6) different homes; she took different items from the houses and even stayed in the houses during the time she was here. The police apprehended her in one (1) of the houses, and, upon gaining access to her vehicle, found the homeowner's iPad remote among other things that linked her to the other burglaries. Several cars were broken into during the month as well. Sgt. Kraig Thompson has been recognized by a citizen for the time spent mentoring an individual who was down on his luck and helping to get it back on track. Chaplain Rob Dewey recognized Pfc. Matt Maloney for his compassion and consolation to the woman whose husband drowned in Wild Dunes. The National Night Out, sponsored by the Police

Department, was a huge success that was well attended by residents; the event received participation from several businesses on the island that provided food. The young people enjoyed the face painter and the helicopter was interesting to everyone. The Police Department had forty-nine hundred (4,900) calls from the total number of calls of six thousand two hundred ninety-one (6,291). Officers wrote seventy-one (71) citations from the three hundred two (302) traffic stops in the month; year-to-date accidents are down by thirty percent (30%). During the month, officers wrote one hundred thirty-nine (139) incident reports; they have written eleven hundred twenty-four (1,124) reports year-to-date. The City has a new certified officer in Daniel Tyson; since he has finished the Academy, he begins twelve (12) weeks of field training. Fifteen (15) noise complaints were made in the month; four (4) received citations and seven (7) received warnings. Four (4) coyote sightings were reported in August.

Chief Buckhannon announced that the IOP Connector Run will take place on Saturday, October 1st.

7. Miscellaneous Business – None

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 4, 2016 in the Conference Room.

8. Executive Session – Not needed

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 a.m.; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk