

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 10, 2010

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 10, 2010 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Bergwerf, Chair Bettelli, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon and City Clerk Copeland. Councilmember Loftus' absence was excused; there was a quorum present to conduct business.

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

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 13, 2010 as submitted; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments - None**

4. Old Business

A. Update on Digital Radio Tower

Chief Graham stated that she expects to have more information at the next meeting than today because a user' group meeting is scheduled to take place in the next couple of weeks. Chief Graham noted that she had met with Greg Malcolm, an engineer with Motorola; Mr. Malcolm provided the Chief with a map, that she distributed, illustrating the coverage difference between a one hundred eighty foot (180 ft) tower and a two hundred thirty foot (230 ft) tower located on the Recreation Department grounds. (A map is attached to the historical record of the meeting.) The yellow portion represents the coverage at one hundred eighty feet, and the blue represents the added coverage from a two hundred thirty foot (230 ft) tower at the same location. Advantages to a one hundred eighty foot (180 ft) tower are that no light would be required for the top of it and there would be no FAA involvement; in addition, space would be available for cell antennae if the carriers chose to relocate from the water tower. Mr. Malcolm did comment that, should the City agree to the construction of a one hundred eighty foot (180 ft) tower, the base should be constructed in such a manner as to support a two hundred thirty foot (230 ft) tower because circumstances in the future could require the higher tower. Mr. Malcolm, as the Motorola engineer re-affirmed to Chief Graham that he could not confidently say that he could resolve the communications issues on the Isle of Palms without erecting a tower on the island. According to the Chief, Mr. Malcolm had reported that the island's public safety personnel would have improved radio coverage without a tower on the island, but, due to the high level of interference coming onto the island from the ocean, he could not guarantee that the problems on the island would be resolved without a tower on the island. Chief Graham stated that she had asked him directly if Motorola had been instructed to place a tower on the island, but he was clear that placing a tower on the Isle of Palms had been his – the engineer's – solution to the island's communications issues.

Chief Graham asked Mr. Malcolm to provide her with a layman's explanation of the term "noise floor" and its effect upon the digital radios that she could relate to City Council. Mr. Malcolm

explained that noise floor could be compared to an air duct that was blowing, not air, but radio interference from the ocean onto the island; Chief Graham reported that the Fire Department was getting radio interference from Florida, Savannah, Georgia and Wilmington, North Carolina, for example.

Administrator Tucker asked that Chief Graham describe the proposed location of the tower at the Recreation Center; the Chief stated that the site that Motorola has suggested is near the ditch between the building and the ball fields. Recreation Director Page asked about the size of the base; the Chief responded that the area to be fenced for the tower would be seventy-five feet (75 ft) square with a twelve-foot (12 ft) raised tower base. Director Page expressed concern that the area would encroach upon the area needed to reconfigure the ball fields.

Chief Graham related that Mr. Malcolm had assured her that, with a one hundred eighty foot (180 ft) tower, public safety personnel would have exceptional radio coverage on the ground, but that repeaters would be needed in the Villages and condominiums. She added that placement of a tower at the Recreation Center would help communication on the north end of the island and at Dewees, plus give additional coverage to the north end of Sullivan's Island.

When asked why Sullivan's Island did not need a tower, Chief Graham responded that Sullivan's Island was served by the TV2 tower and that they were not experiencing problems until Motorola began to "tweek" the system to resolve issues on the Isle of Palms.

Councilmember Bergwerf commented that she would need to see exactly what the tower would look like and exactly where it would be located at the Recreation Center before making a final decision, and she expected other members of Council would also. Councilmember Bergwerf wanted an explanation about why the Six Mile tower could not serve the Isle of Palms in the same way that the T2 tower serves Sullivan's Island. Chair Bettelli noted that Sullivan's Island does not have the large structures like the ones here. Chief Graham explained that the Six Mile tower would boost coverage on the Isle of Palms, but it would not be sufficient to solve the problems created by the noise off the ocean; she said she could flag off the area at the Recreation Center being considered.

Chair Bettelli suggested that Chief Graham provide City Councilmembers with a site map of the proposed tower location at the Recreation Center.

Administrator Tucker pondered what other site would be considered if the residents of the island were not supportive of the ordinance change needed to construct a communications tower. Chief Buckhannon queried about the coverage map after the Six Mile tower is raised and without a tower on the Isle of Palms. Although both Goat Island and Little Goat Island have been proposed as alternate tower sites, the issue with them, according to Chair Bettelli, was power and accessibility.

Chief Graham explained that she expected to get a deadline from the County and Motorola as to when they would need a final decision from the City about a tower. She indicated that one (1) possible reason that Charleston County was not exerting any pressure for a decision was that the County was waiting on the final report from Kimbell, the independent contractor hired to review Motorola's design.

Chair Bettelli state that he would like reassurance that Kimbell has looked at all of the possibilities for the tower placements, but Chief Graham countered that she did not think Kimbell had been charged with anything more than critiquing Motorola's plan.

Administrator Tucker related a conversation between herself and Chief Graham regarding other vendors that might be available at what price for the City to hire to advise the City as it moves toward making a decision on a tower. Chief Graham indicated that she was trying to contact someone.

The Chief related that she had asked about the ramifications should the City decide to wait until the completion of Phase 2 of Motorola's plan in order to have the time to hire a consultant and provide that consultant with enough time to review the Motorola plan and research alternate sites. Mr. Malcolm explained that to delay would be possible, but that doing so would be very expensive because all of the equipment to be included in Phases 1 and 2 would be ordered at the same time to ensure compatibility; if the City were to delay for a year or more, the software would have changed and the software purchased originally would all have to be replaced.

The City Administrator believed it to be important for the Committee to know that people in David Cohen's company (Mr. Cohen serves on the City's Planning Commission.) have offered to meet with her and the two (2) Chiefs, at no charge, to discuss this issue. Mr. Cohen's company is involved in communications and radio towers. Administrator Tucker is in the process of scheduling a meeting with them.

The Administrator suggested that the City begin the process of modifying the ordinance to allow for the construction of a two hundred thirty foot (230 ft) tower in an effort to ascertain the mood on the island about a communications tower. Chair Bettelli noted that the tower ordinance would only pertain to the City; Chief Graham interjected that she had a copy of the ordinance passed by York County that was written specifically to meet the County's public safety needs.

Administrator Tucker had one (1) final thought on the subject to share with the Committee, and it was: If the City were to erect a tower at the Recreation Center and if the communications antennae on the water tower were to be moved to the City's tower resulting in revenue generation, City Council could consider earmarking that revenue for the ball field reconfiguration at the Recreation Center and other recreational improvements. Such a move might make the construction of a tower on the island more palatable to the residents.

B. Update on Public Safety Building

Administrator Tucker reported that architect Dave Johnson was here the last week in July and reviewed the warranty items that remain to be done; a great deal of attention was directed on the problems that continue with the HVAC on the Fire Department side of the building. Summarizing the pages of information Mr. Johnson has provided, the Administrator stated that he had indicated to Mashburn that the HVAC issues and the remaining warranty items should have a resolution goal of two (2) weeks, or August 20, 2010. The City continues to hold money due to Mashburn for the construction of the building; the Administrator reminded the Committee that September 25 was the one year (1 yr) anniversary of the ribbon-cutting for the building.

Chief Graham commented that a few steps toward resolution of the HVAC issues have been taken; the primary concern continues to revolve around control issues – warm air getting into the building from holes that have not been sealed and more data monitors have been placed on the second and third floors by the HVAC manufacturer. The Chief did think that they were homing in on the problem.

5. New Business

A. Consideration of Signal 30 Award

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that there had been a serious boating accident in the IntraCoastal Waterway. The Fire Department has requested that the Public Safety Committee recommend the tour boat captain who witnessed the accident, rescued the victim and brought him to the marina where they were met by EMS and the Fire Department as a Signal 30 Award recipient. The captain is a resident of Mount Pleasant who operates his boat out of the IOP marina. Should the Committee agree to make the recommendation to City Council, the presentation would likely take place at the September Council meeting to allow the young man who was injured to be present. Chair Bettelli stated that he understood the injuries could have been life-threatening had the captain not responded as quickly as he did.

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to recommend to City Council that a Signal 30 Award be granted to the captain of the vessel that pulled the young man from the water; Chair Bettelli seconded.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked for further explanation of exactly what the Signal 30 Award was; Administrator Tucker stated that Signal 30 is the public safety code for citizen's service rendered. The City has adopted the term Signal 30 when it recognizes services performed by citizens that are exemplary; the City has only awarded a few and their names are listed on the City's website.

Chair Bettelli suggested that the name of the award be modified to be more explanatory of why the award is granted, possibly the Signal 30 Citizens Service Award. The Administrator stated that she thought that was the wording as it actually appears on the plaque.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Bettelli suggested that a more detailed explanation be prepared for distribution to Council indicating what the action was, when the action was taken and what the circumstances could have been had the citizen not been on the scene, as well as information on the award itself.

B. Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000

Award of a Contract to T2 Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$18, 180.40 for 4 Casio IT-3100 handhels and printers for Police Department traffic ticketing (included in FY11 State ATAX budget @ \$18,500)

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to approve the award of the contract to T2 Systems as stated; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.

Chief Buckhannon indicated that this should be considered to be a sole source contract because it operates within the court software system allowing for the download of the ticket information and eliminates the need to key each individual ticket issues. The Chair modified the motion to insert the term "sole source."

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Highlights of Department Reports

Fire Department

During the month of July, the Fire Department personnel assisted with multiple instances of persons, both old and young, who were lost for periods of time, and the Fire Department responded to swimmers who were too far from shore and stranded boaters. On July 31, personnel responded to one hundred eighty-three (183) jellyfish stings and twelve (12) stings from stingrays. The Department recorded one hundred ninety-six (196) total calls during the month; one hundred twenty-three (123) of the calls were for EMS. The new fire inspector performed sixty-six (66) inspections during the month and found two hundred thirty (230) violations. Chief Graham stated that vehicle maintenance for the month had been routine and that the Department was back on its preventative maintenance schedule. She announced that, on July 9th, she celebrated her twenty-fifth anniversary with the City of Isle of Palms. Also included in the Fire Department report was a listing of the Fire Department personnel and other persons who volunteered their time to assist with the myriad of activities on July 4th.

Chair Bettelli extended his thanks on behalf of the City for all of the people involved in the July 4th celebration and remarked at how fortunate the City was to have such a level of volunteers for the event.

In conclusion, Chief Graham announced that the Department would have its annual safety audit in September when safety in all departments of the City would be reviewed. In addition, an ISO study – a study of the Fire Department's ability to get water on a fire and record keeping – has been scheduled. It has been several years since the City has had this study, and the resulting rating will determine the rates for residential insurance.

Police Department

Chief Buckhannon reported that the Wild Dunes Resort Management had requested assistance with multiple complaints of underage alcohol consumption, vandalism and trespassing; over the course of the month, several arrests were made in the area of Grand Pavilion. During the month, five thousand thirty-four (5,034) total calls were dispatched; three thousand eight hundred forty-four (3,844) were for the Police Department; and one thousand five hundred forty-eight (1,548) parking tickets were issued. Chief Buckhannon, Sgt. Caldwell and Sgt. Usry assisted the Charleston County Sheriff's Office in preparation for their CALEA onsite re-accreditation inspection; IOP Police Department will have their onsite inspection in December of this year. Of the sixty-eight (68) arrests in the month of July, thirty-three (33) were for underage

drinking; a large majority of arrests were in the association with the special enforcement in Wild Dunes. All personnel within the Department received sexual harassment training. Included in the Livability Report were thirty (30) instances of noise violations with five (5) citations being written; of the fourteen fireworks violations, two (2) citations were written.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Notification of Charity Bike Ride on Saturday, September 11, 2010

Chair Bettelli reminded the Committee and the Chiefs of the charity bike ride that will occur on Saturday, September 11, 2010; the ride will have a staggered start in Mount Pleasant. The Chair iterated that this ride is not a City-sponsored event and is expected to have a minimal impact on the island.

Jim Owens, Palm Boulevard, spoke with Chair Bettelli before the meeting that he was in conversations with people from another regulatory agency attempting to get the abandoned catamarans removed from the beach. Mr. Owens said he would relay his progress to Chair Bettelli.

Administrator Tucker noted that she, Chief Buckhannon, Director Kerr and Assistant City Attorney McCullough met to discuss an ordinance modification that would allow the City to respond to abandoned vessels on the beach. Attorney McCullough is drafting an amendment for Council's consideration that will be similar to the ordinance in the City Code concerning abandoned vehicles on private property. Through this amendment, if passed, the City would be better prepared to address problems like this in the future.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Thursday, September 9, 2010.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk