

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 2, 2011

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:40 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 in the Training Room of the Public Safety Building 30 J. C. Long Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Loftus, Chair Bettelli, City Administrator Tucker, Police Chief Buckhannon, Fire Chief Graham, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban 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 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 February 8, 2011 as submitted; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

4. **Old Business**

Recommendation for 3rd Avenue Parking Problem

Chief Buckhannon reported that he had looked at parking at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and Charleston Boulevard. In an effort to be consistent with the signage at 6th and 7th Avenues, he wrote to the maintenance office of the highway department requesting that they produce and install the same signs at 3rd and Charleston. Chief Buckhannon recommended that, should the highway department not agree with his request, the City should install the signage; the sign reads NO PARKING HERE TO CORNER and has directional arrows. The Chief informed the Committee that he had spoken with the wife of the resident who had asked for assistance from the City

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to amend the agenda to include a discussion about the sandwich board sign ordinance currently before Council; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilmember Loftus prefaced his question by stating that he views this ordinance as a public safety matter; he asked the City Administrator to explain any concerns she had about this ordinance related to public safety. Administrator Tucker stated that her concern is that any sign that has mobility also has the risk that it will not stay on the private property as the ordinance states, but would migrate into the thoroughfare, either street or sidewalk, creating a hazard to vehicles or pedestrians and a liability for the state or the City. Councilmember Loftus summarized the Administrator's comment as "one negative about this ordinance could be the City could be open to additional liability should there be an accident . . ."

Administrator Tucker noted that considerable congestion exists during tourist season in the areas where these signs would be placed; she suggested that a patron could move a sign without the knowledge of the business owner that would create a hazard.

Chair Bettelli stated that he had spoken with a resident who was on Council when the most recent sign ordinance was enacted and who had told him that sandwich board signs had not been addressed at that time.

Councilmember Loftus said he had discussed the new ordinance with former Mayor Sottile who said sandwich boards had been considered then, but no action had been taken because the focus had been to remove the large signs that were detracting from the appearance of the City. Councilmember Loftus added that he had asked now Representative Sottile his opinion and had been told that the ordinance should not be changed.

Councilmember Bergwerf interpreted the omission of sandwich board signs as an indication that previous Council considered them to be a negative and agreed with excluding them from the ordinance.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of Need for Power Source for EMS Vehicles

Chief Graham explained that, unbeknownst to the Fire Department staff, about the same time that the City was building the Public Safety Building, the County's EMS services had changed out the way they charge the EMS trucks. The result is that EMS trucks must continue to run when they are on the island for extended periods of time, because they do not have a power source in the Fire Department. Chief Graham noted that she anticipates having EMS trucks on the island for longer and longer time frames; therefore, she was seeking funds to provide a power source at Station 1 to serve EMS vehicles. Although the Department would need to move some vehicles around in the bay, Chief Graham expressed confidence that the lowest quote would meet the need she has described. The Chief informed the Committee that she had spoken to the City Treasurer who said the work could be paid from the Building Fund since it has not yet been closed out.

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve the quote of \$2,750 to provide power for EMS trucks to be paid from the Building Fund; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Discussion of Carolina Children's Charities Collections

Chief Graham related that this activity was one in which the Fire Department had participated in years past, but one that had not been very successful because the Isle of Palms is at the end of the road in the County. The Chief expressed the desire to participate this year, but to collect on the two (2) weekends before the balance of the County holds its collections, i.e. March 18th and 19th. She thought the Fire Department could don the bright yellow vests for two to three (2-3) hours on Friday and Saturday, March 4th and 5th and March 11th and 12th.

Administrator Tucker noted that additional people will be on the island this weekend with the MS Challenge Walk and the Charleston Wine & Food Festival.

Chief Graham added that money collected for this charity is used in the Charleston area.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to approve collections for Carolina Children's Charities on March 4th and 5th and March 11th and 12th for two to three (2-3) hours each day; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Discussion of Annual CTC and Transportation Sales Tax Requests

Administrator Tucker reported that she had discussed the requests earlier with the Public Works Committee because the deadline is Friday, March 18. These two (2) funds have provided over eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) in grants for the 53rd to 57th Avenue Drainage Project for which a contract has been secured. Included in the long-range plan is the next phase of drainage work between 44th and 52nd Avenues; Public Works made the engineering of that project its first priority request.

The 2011 requests were for the 53rd to 57th Avenue drainage, the paving of Cassina Avenue and Sparrow Lane drainage.

The other requests from Public Works were the paving of Cassina Avenue and, possibly, making the bike path from 41st to 57th Avenues into a multi-use path, a wide path with marking delineating separate bike and walking paths, assuming space is available.

Administrator Tucker explained that these funds can be used for drainage, paving earthen roads, intersection improvements and bike path/lane improvements – basically, anything in this genre except the resurfacing of roads.

Chair Bettelli and Councilmember Bergwerf agreed with the decision to pursue funding for the next phase of drainage improvements. Councilmember Loftus suggested the bike path on 41st Avenue; Administrator Tucker stated that the City has requested rehabilitation of the bike path and been approved; in addition, the road was scheduled for resurfacing. The work was delayed due to the infrastructure improvements done by IOP Water and Sewer; Councilmember Loftus asked the Administrator to confirm with Charleston County that the work was still on their radar.

Administrator Tucker commented that these entities have been extremely generous and supportive of the Isle of Palms with projects over the years. Chair Bettelli noted that the City has learned that a presence at the funding meetings always bodes well for the municipality.

Chair Bettelli voiced support for the selections made by the Public Works Committee.

D. Review of FY12 Operating Budgets for the Fire and Police Departments

Assistant Dziuban commented that she would be concentrating her review on the items that have changed from FY11; she announced that the versions of the capital budgets in packets reflected the changes requested from February meetings.

Chair Bettelli directed comments to Chief Buckhannon and Chief Graham asking that they prioritize their capital budget requests to speed up the process when revenues are presented.

Councilmember Loftus reminded Chief Graham that he had sent an email suggesting that she investigate acquiring a boat from the federal government that had been seized as a result of some criminal activity, and he wanted to know how successful she had been.

Chief Graham said she had contacted the Charleston County Sheriff's Office to be placed on a list they maintain; she also contacted the state liaison with the General Services Administration for securing seized property, but has not heard back.

The Chief reported that she had researched the state purchasing website, spoken with DNR and learned of two (2) in-state manufacturers from whom they have purchased boats that more than adequately meet their needs. Chief Graham noted that she has visited the manufacturing facilities for both Key West and Pioneer boats; she had been very impressed with the quality of the boats and the degree of pride with which they are built. Both companies agreed to make modifications to meet the needs of the Department at a significantly lower price than the Boston Whaler. The Chief indicated that she was leaning toward the Pioneer boat that provides more deck space for personnel and equipment; Pioneer has also agreed to "beef-up" the hull. When the Chief inquired about a warranty with Pioneer, she was told the boat would have a lifetime warranty. The Pioneer boat, motor and trailer can be purchased for thirty-five to forty thousand dollars (\$35,000-40,000).

Fire Department

Wages and salaries	1,180,563
Overtime wages Calculated with a 3% merit pool.	193,800
Part-time wages 30 hrs/weekend for 26 weeks, April through September.	45,803
FICA expense	108,643
Retirement expense	163,227
Workers Compensation All functions of payroll with the 3% merit pool.	46,226
Group health insurance Reflects estimated premium reduction from change to State Health Plan.	183,805
Vehicle fuel and oil Based on 12 months actual usage at \$4/gallon of unleaded and diesel combined.	35,200
Electricity and gas Negligible reduction.	22,500
Telephone and cable Includes the \$25/month/radio fee for 12 months and assumes no increase until FY13.	37,284
Water and sewer Based on 12 months actual.	9,000

Maintenance and service contracts	31,495
Contributing factors to the increase are ½ cost to pressure wash FS2 and PSB once a year and a proportionate share of the cost of the City's firewall service and anti-virus software.	
LTD insurance	-0-
Cost included in the premium from the State Health Plan.	

As presented, the Fire Department FY12 budget is two percent (2%) less than the FY11 budget.

Police Department

Salaries and wages	1,218,449
Overtime wages	106,238
FICA expense	101,339
Retirement expense	144,653
Workers Compensation	41,827
Computed on the 3% merit pool.	
Group health insurance	181,561
Reduction reflects estimated premiums with State Health Plan.	
Meetings and seminars	1,500
In FY12, City representatives will not attend the CALEA conference.	
Vehicle fuel and oil	116,000
Based on 12 months actual usage and both unleaded and diesel at \$4/gallon.	
Maintenance and service contracts	44,560
Largest portion of the increase to this account is attributable to an annual maintenance agreement on the dispatching radio equipment and a pro-rata share of cost for firewall and anti-virus software.	
LTD insurance	-0-
Cost is included in premium for State Health Plan.	

The Police Department FY12 budget, as presented, is as flat budget with no increase or decrease from FY11.

Councilmember Loftus asked that detail information be provided for the fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500) assigned to "Meetings and Seminars;" since the City will not be attending CALEA in 2012, he expected the budget to more closely reflect the actual expenses incurred in FY10. In addition, he requested the detail listing of expenses that make up "Professional Services" for both the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Councilmember Loftus concluded his comments by complimenting both Chiefs for their efforts in managing expenses in their departments "in very tough economic times," and he asked that they identify any items that could be reduced or eliminated from the FY12 budgets. He was concerned about the increase in "Medical and Lab Supplies" in the Police Department that had

an actual in FY10 of approximately twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) to a budget of fifty-five hundred (\$5,500) in FY11 and FY12.

Chief Buckhannon noted that the City now has an in-house lab to keep stocked, but, also included in the number are the medical screenings done for new employees.

E. Consideration of Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department

Chief Graham commented that the Fire Department does retrieve cats stranded in trees or on a rooftop as they did in Wild Dunes on February 19. After the heavy winds on February 22, Department personnel used chain saws to cut and remove a tree in the road at 19th Avenue and Myrtle Boulevard. The Department received forty (40) total calls in the month of February, and half of them were EMS calls. Seventy-seven (77) fire inspections were performed and fifty-seven (57) violations were found; Chief Graham pointed out that, for a change, the number of violations was lower than the number of inspections. A variety of items made up vehicle maintenance for the month, but of primary note was the replacement of cables on Tower 1.

Police Department

In reviewing highlights of the month, Chief Buckhannon stated that officers responded to a three (3) vehicle accident at the base of the Connector and Palm Boulevard; the driver at fault was charged with Driving Under the Influence. On February 26, an officer stopped a vehicle in front of him on the Connector driven erratically, and the driver was found to be in possession of marijuana. Dispatchers received and dispatched a total of twenty-nine hundred thirty-seven (2,937) calls in the months; of that number, nineteen hundred thirty-eight (1,938) were for the Police Department. The patrol officers made two hundred seventy (270) traffic stops that warranted one hundred five (105) citations. Of the three (3) new patrol officers, one (1) has completed training and is in the field; another officer will go before the review board next week, and the third should be in the field by the end of the month. In the month of February, eleven (11) noise violations were reported, but no citations were written.

7. Executive Session – not needed

8. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 4, 2011

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m.; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk