

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

5:30 p.m., Monday, April 4, 2011

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 4, 2011 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Loftus, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon 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 March 2, 2011 as submitted; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Having reviewed the minutes of the March meeting, Arnold Karig of 5102 Palm Boulevard commented that he did not think space was available to accommodate a multi-use path between 41st and 51st Avenue like the one being requested by the City in its requests for use of CTC and Transportation Sakes Tax funds.

Administrator Tucker commented that an ASSHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) bike path would be a continuation from the road to the existing bike path assuming space would allow; at the very least, the Administrator noted that the existing path is in poor condition and in need of repair.

Before moving on to *Old Business*, Councilmember Loftus commented that he had expected the alarm ordinance discussed at the March City Council meeting to be on the agenda; he indicated that Mr. Karig had made remarks at the meeting that Council agreed should be included.

Administrator Tucker stated that she, too, had thought it should be on the agenda, but a review of the Council minutes indicated that City Council had sent the ordinance to the Planning Commission for further discussion. The Administrator pointed out that this ordinance had originated with the Public Safety Committee and that to amend the agenda to discuss it would be well within the Committee's purview.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to amend the agenda to discuss the alarm ordinance under *Old Business*; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Old Business

Discussion of Ordinance 2011-04

Administrator Tucker recalled that the concern expressed had been that the installing alarm company be aware of and responsible for registering the alarm with the City rather than the property owner. Mr. Karig had noted that the property owner would have no reason to know that he/she was required to register the alarm with the city and that, frequently, the homeowner could be the alarm system installer. In cases where the homeowner installs the alarm, he/she would not know about the registration requirement until a situation arose when a false alarm occurs and he/she is ticketed for not registering the alarm.

Chief Graham suggested that the ordinance be changed to read “the installer” as the party required to register the alarm, thereby, including the property owner who installs the system himself.

Councilmember Loftus expressed his opinion that, since the alarm companies are required to purchase a business license to install alarms on the island, the responsibility for educating the company about the City’s ordinance requirements falls to the Building Department.

Chief Buckhannon reported that, in the sixteen (16) years that the ordinance has been in the City code, he does not remember anyone paying a fine. Typically, when a ticket is written, the homeowner can pay for the alarm registration and have the ticket dismissed.

Administrator Tucker summarized the discussion stating that the staff would review the ordinance and the internal processes to devise a better way to educate the installation companies and property owners. Staff will have the recommendations in place before the ordinance comes before City Council for Second Reading.

Review of FY12 Capital and Operating Budgets for Fire and Police Departments

Prefacing the discussion, Administrator Tucker explained that she, the City Treasurer and the individual department managers had met and analyzed the operating budgets after the Ways and Means March meeting and before the budget workshop for April 19. The staff chose to look at recent history rather than just the prior year’s or year-to-date expenditures; actual expenditures through February are misleading for budget purposes, because the City has yet to get into the tourist season which puts a strain on City resources. In the analysis process, they had looked at the most recent five (5) years audited financial statements and addressed each line item that was five hundred dollars (\$500) greater than the five (5) year average.

Police Department

Lines 67 through 74 all relate to employee compensation and were not addressed for the purpose of this analysis.

Printing and office supplies	15,420
The analysis shows that this number is as close as possible	
Memberships and dues	1,295
No change	

Meetings and seminars	1,500
Included here is a conference attended by Chief Buckhannon on the Police Department software	
Vehicle fuel and oil	116,000
Analysis on-going; amount will stay the same or possibly be reduced	
Vehicle maintenance	27,000
No change; the police vehicles must be kept in top repair in order to be reliable	
Electricity and gas	22,000
The increase in this item is attributed to correcting the SCE&G equipment problem that, previously, afforded the City with much lower than anticipated charges. The number could change in that the City will receive one (1) billing reflective of actual charges before the budget is passed.	
Telephone and cable	34,992
No change	
Water and sewer	5,500
No change	
Non-capital tools and equipment	1,500
Reduce by \$500 to the approximate 5-year average	
Maintenance and service contracts	41,805
The addition of \$7,520 for the annual maintenance on the dispatching radio equipment generated the increase in this line item	

Administrator Tucker reported that the five (5) year analysis was complicated by the fact that the Police and Fire Departments do not have five (5) years of experience in the Public Safety Building. Research into maintenance contracts for the City's elevators is on-going; a couple of the issues the staff has confronted are that the elevators came online at varying times and they are not from the same manufacturer.

Councilmember Loftus asked whether the City was required to have the manufacturer service the elevators, and the Administrator replied that no such requirement existed. The city could possibly see some cost savings if they were all under one (1) contract, so efforts are being pursued for a global contract.

Councilmember Loftus inquired of Chief Buckhannon the date for the planned move of dispatch activities to the County-wide consolidated dispatch center; Chief Buckhannon replied that the date had been pushed back to July 2013 because of delays in breaking ground on the new facility.

In addition, Councilmember Loftus asked for clarification of "hood maintenance;" he was told that the maintenance is for the hoods on the stoves in the Public Safety Building. Because the Public Safety Building was constructed to serve the City in a disaster, these specific hoods were necessary, and they must have monthly inspections and be properly maintained under state regulations.

Machinery and equipment repair	6,000
No change	
Uniforms	16,515
Reduced by \$1,500 based on analysis	
Cleaning and sanitary supplies	2,000
No change	
Medical and lab supplies	4,500
Reduced by \$1,000 based on analysis; includes costs associated with medical tests related to hiring	

Insurance	61,723
No change	
Rents and leases	2,600
No change	
Employee training	8,980
No change	
Professional services	5,750
Reduced by \$1,500 based on analysis	
Miscellaneous and contingency	3,750
No change	
Canine Kennel Expenses	1,000
No change	

The staff review of the Police Department Operating budget resulted in a new increase of seven hundred forty-five dollars (\$745).

Fire Department

The same five (5) year analysis was performed on the Fire Department expenditures, and the Administrator highlighted the changes.

As in the Police Department, the first eight (8) lines relate to employee compensation and no changes were made to those line items.

Printing and office supplies	7,000
Reduced by \$1,000 based on analysis	
Memberships and dues	2,000
No change	
Meetings and seminars	1,500
Reduced by \$15,00 based on analysis; includes Fire Inspector dues	
Vehicle fuel and oil	35,200
As before, on-going evaluation; expected to stay the same or go down	
Vehicle maintenance	50,000
No change. This equipment must be kept in top condition to be able to respond immediately.	
Electricity and gas	32,000
Increased by \$1,500 based on resolution of SCE&G problem	
Telephone and cable	37,284
No change	
Water and sewer	9,000
No change	
Non-capital tools and equipment	6,500
No change	
Maintenance and service contracts	36,592
No change. Administrator Tucker commented that up to \$1,000 was included as a contribution to the Sullivan's Island training facility; this money is used to make the small repairs that occur when the City fire personnel are training there – the amount used varies from year-to-year depending on circumstances.	

Councilmember Bergwerf asked about the housekeeping for the Fire Department; Chief Graham indicated that the living quarters are cleaned by the personnel on duty and that only the common areas are cleaned by an outside vendor.

Administrator Tucker commented that a bid will go out for cleaning City Hall that will go into effect July 1, 2011. A similar process took place shortly after the City took occupancy of the Public Safety Building, and the vendor at the Public Safety Building has not changed. The Administrator noted that the vendor for City Hall and the Public Safety Building are different.

Councilmember Loftus asked whether the City could get a more competitive price if it were to bundle the City buildings under one (1) contract.

Uniforms	22,000
Reduced by \$1,000 based on analysis	
Cleaning and sanitary supplies	4,000
Reduced by \$1,000 based on analysis	
Medical and lab supplies	16,000
Reduced by \$1,000 based on analysis	
Insurance	78,951
No change	
Rents and leases	2,500
No change	
Employee training	14,000
Reduced by \$3,000 based on analysis	
Professional services	3,000
Reduced by \$1,160 based on analysis	
Miscellaneous and contingency	6,500
Reduced by \$500 based on analysis	
Volunteer Fire Points	4,000
No change	

Administrator Tucker explained that the Capital Budgets on the following pages are presented in a different format from what the Committee has seen before; in the new schedules, the FY12 capital expenditures are shown with their funding source. No changes have been made to the Police Department's Capital Budget since the last version was presented to the Committee; the Administrator noted that the expenditures under *Facilities Maintenance* were included in the operating budget and here due to the dollar amounts.

Councilmember Loftus asked whether purchasing one (1) out of three (3) patrol vehicles through tourism funds was typical for the City; the Administrator indicated that it was and stated that vehicles had been purchased from the Victims and Narcotics funds in the past. Administrator Tucker commented that more police calls are generated by tourists in season than other times of the year; therefore, the City could make a legitimate case for the use of tourism funds.

On the Fire Department Capital Budget, the Administrator pointed out that fifty percent (50%) of the capital leases for equipment are to be paid from tourism funds. Like the Police Capital Budget, no changes have been made to the figures since the Ways and Means meeting, and

the schedule illustrates the source of funding for these expenditures. Lines 84 through 76 are routine, cyclical replacements and are represented on this schedule due to the costs.

Councilmember Bergwerf questioned that the replacement boat for the Fire Department was on the capital budget for fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000); Administrator Tucker recounted that Chief Graham indicated, at the previous meeting, that she has looked at Pioneer and Key West boats, both of which are on state contract pricing, as possible replacements at a cost of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000), but the Committee did not move to reduce the cost estimate on the budget.

Chair Bettelli asked Chief Graham whether she was confident that she would not exceed forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) in replacing the boat, and she stated that she was.

Councilmember Loftus expressed that he could not support spending that much for a boat in these economic times and that lower cost alternatives must exist. He remarked that the City should be able to get a boat that would serve its needs through state surplus or some type of government seizure, possible a used boat could be retro-fitted. Chief Graham related that she had contacted the federal group about seized equipment and had been told that they will be receiving a shipment from government agencies, but the condition of the equipment was unknown, and, typically, the motors are not in working condition.

Chair Bettelli commented that, when amortizing forty thousand dollars (\$50,000) over twenty (20) years, which is how long he present boat has be in use, the cost is quite low; he added that the committees have not yet seen revenues and that the responsibility of City Council was, to the best of its ability, to meet the needs of the City and its residents, which cannot be accomplished with the existing boat.

Chief Graham noted that a new boat should be a commercial grade boat, not a sport boat.

Administrator Tucker indicated that the staff proposed purchasing the boat through tourism funds which were tracking well ahead of what was projected for the FY11 budget.

According tom Chief Graham, repairs in the neighborhood of six thousand dollars (\$6,000) would be required to keep the existing boat in service, and she and the Administrator agreed that such repairs were not cost effective.

Administrator Tucker suggested that the boat could be removed from the City's FY12 capital budget and could be purchased from State Accommodations taxes; the possibility exists that funds may be available not.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to reduce the boat purchase in the Fire Department Capital Budget to \$40,000; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.

Councilmember Loftus stated that he was not in favor of spending this amount for a boat when he was confident that lower cost alternatives were available, but agreed that providing public safety for the residents and tourists was critical.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker noted that the final pages were a reiteration of expenses by funding source. The Administrator explained that a portion of every ticket paid goes to a Victims Fund and is returned to the City for victims or crime; the City only provides custodial services for the Fire 1% Fund because all of the decisions are made by the Fire Department personnel.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of Livability Court Request for Home Detention Ordinance

Chair Bettelli reported that he and the city Administrator had received an email from the Livability Court judge asked that the City consider home detention as a method of punishment. Administrator Tucker commented that she had passed the suggestion to the City Attorney for research into the state laws regarding home detention. The research indicated that the City would be required to enact a new ordinance, contract with an entity to monitor those sentenced to home detention and incur additional expenses related to it.

Responding to Councilmember Bergwerf's question, the Administrator stated that she had not investigated the initial startup costs because neither she nor Chief Buckhannon recommends the action. Chief Buckhannon mentioned that he had spoken with Charleston County and learned that they had rejected the idea as well.

After brief discussion, the Committee agreed to take no action on the subject of home detention.

B. Discussion of Command Positions in Police Department

Chief Buckhannon stated that Friday, April 1 had been Lieutenant Wright's last day with the City and that he was looking into the best way to fill the vacancy. He commented that, at one time, the City had another position between those of lieutenant and sergeant, and he was proposing that the City return to that structure. The Chief indicated that he has the staff presently to fill two (2) such positions that would share the lieutenant's workload and report directly to him; these would be new positions that would be filled by existing personnel – no increase in the number of people in the Police Department.

Administrator Tucker stated that, should the Committee agree with the Chief's proposal, he would need to prepare the job descriptions for these positions with appropriate wage ranges to present to the Personnel Committee for approval. Consequently, the current lieutenant's position would go away and be replaced with these two (2) new positions. Once the job descriptions and pay ranges are approved, the Chief can begin reviewing applications.

Chief Buckhannon responded to Councilmember Loftus' concern about budget impact by stating that this change will be budget neutral; the Police Department will be eliminating one (1) salary while increasing two (2) other salaries.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved for Chief Buckhannon to proceed with the proposed command positions; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Consideration of Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000 – None

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department

Chief Graham stated that personnel had reported a fuel spill at the marina on March 6th that turned out to be a situation where a crew had overfilled a tank leaking a small amount of fuel into the water. On March 9th, personnel responded to a tour bus fire on Front Beach emanating from the engine compartment; on March 16th, staff responded to an alarm activation at Sweet-grass Pavilion that was the result of a sump pump that had shorted out and overheated. Isle of Palms' personnel assisted with the wild fires in Awendaw on March 23rd and 24th. During the month, fire personnel installed several smoke detectors and assisted residents who had fallen in their homes.

Pursuant to a request from the Committee to track EMS response times, Chief Graham offered the Committee the first draft of a report to get their feedback on the format. Councilmember Loftus suggested a separate column indicating when EMS originated their response from Station 1 versus off-island; Chair Bettelli requested a column where the response time had been computed.

Police Department

Chief Buckhannon reported that, on March 26th, four (4) young ladies from Berkeley County were picked up for stealing merchandise from Front Beach businesses. The same day, a report was made of a beer can being thrown at a car from partiers in Wild Dunes who turned out to be five (5) nineteen (19) year olds found to in possession of both beer and liquor; they were charged with underage possession. Four (4) juveniles between the ages of ten and fourteen (10-14) were spray painting cars and signs; a total of fourteen (14) separate instances were recorded. Two (2) of the young people were island residents and two (2) were from Mount Pleasant.

During the month of March, the dispatchers responded to thirty-nine hundred (3,900) calls; twenty-nine hundred fifty-five (2,955) were for the Police Department. A total of twelve hundred twenty-seven (1,227) building checks were performed; four hundred twenty-nine (429) traffic stops generated one hundred sixty-nine (169) tickets.

Administrator Tucker cautioned Committee members to keep their bicycles and golf carts locked up as the City was seeing a rash of thefts and subsequent damage to the items.

In conclusion, Chief Buckhannon announced that the Police Department had received its third (3rd) accreditation from CALEA in Bethesda, Maryland on March 26th. Chair Bettelli reported that the Department had received "a wonderful report."

7. Executive Session – Not needed

8. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 3, 2011 in Council Chambers.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk