

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 2, 2011

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 2, 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, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, 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 Loftus moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 13, 2011 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Mary Thomas, 5813 Back Bay Drive, thanked the Fire and Police Departments for their quick response to the burning tree that resulted from an automobile accident near her home in early July.

Wayne Jones, 6 Fifty-second Avenue, expressed concern about the safety of bicyclists on Palm Boulevard; he noted that the bike lane is only on one (1) side of the road and there are no indications that the lane is for two-way cycling. He commented about the growing number of cyclists on the roadways. He voiced his opinion that any parking plan should include a safety plan and that cyclists be encouraged to use Waterway Boulevard rather than Palm Boulevard that is quite narrow. Mr. Jones stated that he would like to see some safety program established for cyclists before a serious accident occurs.

Chair Bettelli noted that Palm Boulevard is actually Highway 703 down to Forty-first Avenue and falls under the jurisdiction of SCDOT. He also said that the City has sought grants in the past to improve the City's bike paths; he added that, under South Carolina law, bicycles have the same rights for the use of the roads as an automobile. The Chair reported that the Palm Boulevard bike path was built before SCDOT required bike paths on both sides of the road, as they do today. Chair Bettelli assured Mr. Jones that this Committee frequently discusses bicycles and is also concerned about the safety of cyclists on the island.

4. Old Business

Consideration of Revisions to Ordinance 2011-04

Administrator Tucker reported that the staff is trying to devise an administrative process, not a legislative process, for solving the problem described by Dr. Karig relative to the alarm ordinance. Several possibilities have been discussed, but staff continues to gather data. Staff anticipates further discussion with Dr. Karig and with alarm companies in an effort to develop a procedural remedy for the problem.

Chair Bettelli and Councilmember Loftus agreed that they would prefer an administrative process over legislation and encouraged staff to proceed.

5. New Business

A. 2012 Disaster Preparedness Expo

Chair Bettelli stated that he had added this item to the agenda because the decision had been made in 2010 to hold the Disaster Expo every two (2) years because of dwindling attendance; disaster preparedness information is available at City Hall. With potential hurricane Emily gaining strength in the Atlantic, Chair Bettelli commented that it was important that people review their disaster plans and be prepared, just in case.

Councilmember Loftus voiced his understanding that the City rotated hosting the Disaster Expo with Sullivan's Island; Administrator Tucker said that has been the practice in the past, but she would be willing to host again in 2012 to showcase the Public Safety Building.

From the City's 2010 After Action Report, staff recommended holding the Disaster Expo in the spring when school is still in session; efforts would be made to coordinate with schools and families to educate as many people as possible. Sullivan's Island agrees with the spring timing of the event, possibly, incorporating classroom lessons and activities during the week and concluding the week with the Disaster Expo.

Councilmember Loftus suggested tying the Expo to an activity with the Sullivan's Island Elementary School PTA; the Administrator noted that the Sullivan's Island school was the one (1) with whom the City would partner.

Chair Bettelli recounted that the future of Sullivan's Island Elementary School is uncertain.

Councilmember Bergwerf voiced agreement with the idea of holding the Expo in the spring, recalling how terribly hot it had been in 2010; she stated that the heat was likely a factor in the low turnout in 2010.

B. Consideration of Award of Contract in Excess of \$10,000

Award of a Contract to Replace Animal Control Pickup Truck Included in FY12 Capital Budget

Chief Buckhannon explained that the Committee had two (2) purchase orders in the meeting packet; one (1) is for a Chevrolet 1500 truck and the second (2nd) is for a Ford F250 truck – both trucks are on state contract.

The Chevrolet 1500 happens to be a vehicle that is in-stock at Love Chevrolet in Columbia, but it may not be available when the City completes the procurement process at the end of the month. The Ford F250 would be built-out and available in ninety (90) days.

Both trucks are four-wheel (4 wheel) drive vehicles that are needed for operation on the beach.

The Chevrolet dealer has agreed to a minimum trade-in of twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) the City's current truck sight unseen, which needs approximately one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of repairs now. Chief Buckhannon stated that he is not planning to do the repairs, but to use the funds toward the new vehicle purchase.

If the in-stock Chevrolet is not available, the City would get a built-out 2012 model that would not be available until the end of November. The Chief stated that he does not know what the pricing on the 2012 Chevrolet model will be.

Administrator Tucker summarized that, because he has a problem with the existing vehicle, Chief Buckhannon would like to purchase the Chevrolet that is in-stock with the trade-in, rather than the less expensive Ford without trade which would require him to spend the thousand dollars (\$1,000) to keep the existing truck operational.

Chair Bettelli asked whether the Chief would purchase the Ford if the in-stock Chevrolet was not available; Chief Buckhannon said he would look to the Ford because the build-out time would be less than the ninety (90) days for the 2012 model Chevrolet.

Councilmember Loftus noted that the price difference between the two (2) vehicles was not substantial and asked whether the Chief was concerned about buying a 2011 model over the 2012 model. Chief Buckhannon responded that the Department would keep the vehicle for the same six-year (6 yr.) period no matter which model year and that the difference between the two (2) model years was relatively insignificant.

In response to Councilmember Loftus' query, Chief Buckhannon indicated that the mileage on the City's truck was between one hundred thirty-five and one hundred forty thousand (135,000-140,000) miles.

If the City were to decide on the Ford, Chief Buckhannon said the City's current truck would be taken to the auction where it should get twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500).

Councilmember Loftus asked whether the current truck would last until November to get the new model year Ford which is less expensive. The Chief expressed confidence that he could get another couple of months' use from the truck as is.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to award a contract in the amount of \$23,374.00 to Benson Ford Mercury for one 2012 Ford F250 Pickup Truck; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Before moving to the Departmental Reports, Councilmember Bergwerf recounted speaking to a manager at *The Windjammer* who suggested that the parking meters remain active all year with free parking for hurricane re-entry stickers. He reported that, once the meters are deactivated, the guests at the hotels fill parking that could be used by *Windjammer* customers.

Administrator Tucker reminded Committee members that hurricane re-entry stickers are valid for five-years (5 yrs.) meaning cars of folks who are no longer residents may have them.

Councilmember Bergwerf added that, if the City adopts a parking plan, all residents may be issued new stickers that would be directly tied to parking.

6. Highlights of Department Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

Chief Graham reported that the Fire Department responded to one hundred seventy-six (176) incidents in July, the majority of which were water calls. The most significant incident was the plane crash on July 20 off Dewees Island that received multi-jurisdictional responses from the Isle of Palms, Charleston County, Awendaw, U.S. Coast Guard, Sullivan's Island and others. On July 23, eleven (11) kayakers in distress in the Waterway were brought back to the marina and treated as necessary. During the month, personnel treated many jellyfish and stingray stings.

Chair Bettelli questioned whether the kayakers had been inexperienced boaters with rental equipment; Chief Graham stated that she did not think the kayakers had been rented from the marina because they have a reputation for looking after their groups very well. Chief Graham did agree to confirm what the situation had been.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

Chief Buckhannon was pleased to announce that, following the fireworks show on July 4th, traffic was cleared from the island by 11:15 p.m. On July 27th, a residence was broken into and items stolen; a suspect was identified who stole a vehicle the following day. The suspect later wrecked the vehicle in Georgia, was hospitalized, escaped from the hospital and stole another vehicle; he was apprehended in Arkansas. During the month of July, dispatchers responded to five thousand fifty-eight (5,058) calls; thirty-nine hundred forty-nine (3,949) were for the Police Department. Of the two hundred sixty-six (266) traffic stops in July, one hundred five (105) received some type of citation; officers issued one thousand ninety-five (1,095) parking tickets. Since the first of the year, the City has experienced a large increase in incidents of "thefts from vehicles;" in 2011, there have been thirty-four (34) such crimes while, for the same period in 2010, there were only four (4). The Department had thirty-eight (38) arrests in July; half of the arrests were liquor law violations. A large portion of the month's overtime was incurred for Special Assignments for the July 4th weekend. Eighteen (18) noise complaints were received by the Department, but only one (1) citation was written; some of the founded complaints were before the hours of 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. when the officers are less prone to issue citations.

7. Executive Session – Not necessary

8. Miscellaneous Business

Administrator Tucker reported that the maintenance contract on the City's radios is a state contract; the estimated amount budgeted for FY12 for the Police Department was seventy-five hundred twenty dollars (\$7,520), but the actual amount is ninety-nine hundred fifty-four dollars (\$9,954). The Administrator wanted the Committee to be aware of an overage in this budget

line-item of twenty-four hundred thirty four dollars (\$2,434); she assured the Committee that every effort would be made to recover that amount in another area of the Police Department budget.

Councilmember Loftus related that the residence at 4002 Palm Boulevard has a "No Parking" sign in their yard that does not resemble an authorized SCDOT sign, and he wanted to know how this rental property could be allowed to have such a sign.

Administrator Tucker said that enforcement has been done on that house by the Livability Officer; the sign is currently positioned on private property; therefore, actions by the City are limited. The City has inquired of SCDOT about their position on a "No Parking" sign that does not appear to be an official sign and is on private property.

Councilmember Loftus stated that he had a request from Deborah Streetman of 4004 Palm Boulevard about parking on the right-of-way at the front of her property which blocks visibility, and, since the road widens to two (2) lanes in that area, she believes that people are speeding up, and she is concerned about safety. She would like for the City to investigate the possibility of placing "No Parking" signs where the road splits into two (2) lanes.

Administrator Tucker stated that the request would have to be made to SCDOT since Palm Boulevard is state Highway 703 in that location.

Chair Bettelli suggested relocating the "No Parking" sign to the section of Palm where it becomes two (2) lanes.

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that she understood the right-of-way to be thirty-eight feet (38 ft.) on either side of the road and that Ms. Streetman blocks a portion of that right-of-way with the foliage between her house and the road. The Councilmember said that she was unsure that a vehicle could legally park in front of Ms. Streetman's residence.

Chair Bettelli asked the Administrator to look into Ms. Streetman's request.

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee members that the Meducare helicopter would be holding exercises on the island Tuesday, August 9th through Thursday, August 11th on the grounds of the Recreation Center.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 13, 2011 in Council Chambers.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 p.m.; Councilmember Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk