

CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 9, 2008

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2008 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Bettelli, Councilman Buckhannon and Mayor Sottile, as well as City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. Councilman Taylor was also present as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

1. **Call to Order** and acknowledgement that the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes** - March 10, 2008

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 10, 2008 as submitted; Councilman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments**

Brett Carlson made a brief presentation to the Public Safety Committee on the Barrier Island Ecothon and asked for the same level of support from the Police and Fire Departments that he had received in the past. Supporting information is attached to the minutes. Mayor Sottile asked the two (2) Chiefs if this event had posed any problems on the island in the past; they both answered negatively. Administrator Tucker confirmed that this event was on the City's listing of approved annual events.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to allow events of the Barrier Island Ecothon to take place on the Isle of Palms in October 2008; Councilman Buckhannon seconded.

Councilman Bettelli was concerned that the number of participants be limited due to problems that have come up in the past. Mr. Carlson also noted that the participants would be staggered over the island, so that there was not strong impact at any one location at any one time.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Old Business**

A. **Status of Public Safety Building**

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that Cole+Russell was in the process of verifying the references for the low bidder and the sub-contractors that contractor identified. She distributed to the Committee members the information on the alternates named in the bid along with their descriptions, costs and the architects' opinions on that alternate to the project. She noted that the Committee members should study because, once the clearance on the potential low bidder is received, the Mayor would, in all likelihood, call a Special Meeting to award the contract. At that time, the decisions between the eight (8) alternates would need to be as well.

Once the decisions on the total project were made, the total cost could be determined and a date established for the bond closing.

B. Discussion of 41st Avenue Intersection

Councilman Bettelli recounted that he had spoken with Mark Nesbitt who was the SC DOT engineer that actually looked at the intersection and made the recommendations that were in the most recent communication from DOT. He confirmed that he had not visited the site, but that the DOT had detailed drawings to study. Mr. Nesbitt had expressed that the only ways to resolve the issues relative to the intersection were to reconfigure it or to construct the roundabout that was the City's preference. He did ask if it would be possible for Wild Dunes to stagger its check in/check out times to facilitate traffic movement. Mr. Nesbitt also suggested that business was responsible for the growth, therefore, should also be responsible for the traffic patterns.

Administrator Tucker did state that many communities have developed impact fees in addition to business licenses and permit fees to be imposed on developers to pay for infrastructure improvements. She added that it would be difficult to impose such fees on a development that has already been completed.

Councilman Bettelli again confirmed with Chief Buckhannon that the police would be continually monitoring the traffic at 41st Avenue and would step in when needed.

Mayor Sottile stated that, under the fiscal constraints the City was presently working, there was no possibility that the roundabout could be constructed in the near future; therefore, he proposed ending the discussions on the 41st Avenue intersection and removing it from future agendas. The Committee was in agreement with what it wanted to do at the site and everything was being done in the meantime to handle the traffic until that could occur.

C. Discussion on Additional Golf Cart Parking on the Island

Councilman Buckhannon stated that he was still working on the project and would have a report at the next meeting.

Councilman Bettelli reported that, during the afternoon, he had seen some four (4) golf carts parked on the right-of-way where there was golf cart parking at 42nd Avenue; he had also seen golf carts at 44th and 46th Avenues on the right-of-way.

D. Discussion of FY 2008-2009 Operating and Capital Budgets for Fire and Police Departments

Administrator Tucker began her comments with changes that were universal to each budget; these items were as follows:

- Fuel – calculations based on \$3.10/gal for unleaded and \$3.60/gal for diesel;
- Insurance – an increase in premium based on the re-appraisal of City property;
- Salaries – calculations involved the March 18, 2008 Archer recommendations, the 2% average merit and 2.9% COLA;
- Employee benefits were influenced by the changes made to salaries;
- Retirement changed based on the state mandated percentage;
- Health insurance decreased based on a 4%, rather than 9%, increase;
- Potential Charleston County radio fees are included in *Telephone & Cable* line and wireless cards – four (4) for Police and three (3) for Fire;
- *Water and Sewer* increased based on actual.

The Administrator explained that she had removed the Fire Department request for twelve (12) additional firefighters from the budget for two (2) reasons, the first reason being that the City could not afford to do it this budget year. The second reason was that state law would not allow for enough of a millage increase this year to support that many new personnel which meant that the City Council would have to pass a deficit budget, then next year increase the millage to make up for the deficit from the prior year. There were no additional increases to the Police Department operating budget.

Fire Department

The line for *Meeting and Seminars* was increased based on additional training for the Training Officer. Due to the increased cost of maintenance resulting from the age of Engine 2, *Vehicle Maintenance* was increased by three thousand dollars (\$3,000); in addition, the elevator maintenance for Fire Station 2 was added to *Maintenance and Service*.

Councilman Taylor asked Chief Buckhannon if additional funds were included for telephone and cable relative to the Public Safety Building. Chief Buckhannon responded that he would move the servers that the City already has; he related that he

was working with a two (2) contingencies, i.e. to keep the infrastructure exactly the same and link to City Hall through the existing T1 line, or, if the link is unavailable, to purchase an additional firewall appliance for City Hall plus fractional or full T1 line.

Police Department – Capital Budget

Chief Buckhannon reviewed his priority listing of capital requests. He reminded the members that City vehicles were on a six (6) year replacement cycle, which was a long time for operating police cars; the Department was requesting one (1) sedan and two (2) 4WD vehicles. The request for body armor was a safety issue since the warranty expired after five (5) years. The fact that VSH was a dying technology was the key factor in replacement of VHS in-car cameras; there was also the fact that, due to age, breakdowns with the cameras were becoming commonplace, but finding replacement parts was more difficult. The Police Department's fourth most important request was for the radio repeater system for Wild Dunes for both new and existing structures to make radio transmission reliable. Next was the replacement of two (2) mobile data terminals for the vehicles. Lastly was the replacement of a computer server that was used 24/7 for dispatch; a crash would pose a serious problem. The paneled truck was the only new item on capital budget.

Mayor Sottile asked how many more digital cameras were needed to accommodate all of the police vehicles; Chief Buckhannon responded that the Department has one (1) camera and thirteen (13) vehicles.

Mayor Sottile asked for more information on the repeaters that both the Fire and Police Departments were requesting. Chief Buckhannon stated that the best possible solution for the Police Department would be to mount the repeater on the building in Wild Dunes; he explained that, without the repeater, communication between police officers was "hit or miss" in The Villages. He reported that other factors that effected communication were the location of the officers within the building, atmospheric conditions, the size of the structure, the type of construction used in the building, and even the water along the coast effected the radio frequency. The reason that two (2) repeaters were needed was that the Police and Fire Departments operate on different frequencies; Chief Buckhannon noted that there was a way for the two agencies to use the same repeater, but it would be considerably more expensive than buying two (2). Mayor Sottile asked if the two (2) Departments had known that they would have this problem and that they would need to purchase the repeaters. Chief Buckhannon responded that they had not and that the problem was impacting Wild Dunes as well. Administrator Tucker commented that the Departments were still evaluating the choices to determine the best alternative. Chief Graham related that, with the portable repeater, they had encountered a time delay. The Chiefs stated also that they anticipated a similar situation to exist in the new Public Safety Building.

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee members, if they had any issues with the way the costs of capital expenditures were distributed between the City's funds, to please contact her or City Treasurer Suggs.

Fire Department – Capital Budget

Chief Graham distributed a handout to Committee members that listed the requests from the Fire Department, the associated cost, quantity being requested and justification for each. (Copy attached.) Committee members were referred to page 38 of the budget document. The priority item was the repeater, and it was followed by items that were on scheduled replacement – SCBA and cylinders, bunker gear and fire hose and appliances.

Mayor Sottile interrupted to confirm that the handout indicated the Fire Department was requesting two (2) repeaters since the budget had indicated only one (1). In the justification, the Chief was seeking one mobile and one fixed for Fire Station 2; the number was reduced to one (1) as was in the budget.

Chief Graham continued through her handout.

Mayor Sottile had several questions for Chief Graham; he began by asking how Chief Graham how she could be sure that both jet skis need to be replaced. Her response was that the Department did not need to be in a position to take a chance that one did not work since they were in the water every day in the summer. The Mayor said he knew that many departments wanted the thermal imaging cameras and several had acquired them through grants; he asked if the Chief had applied for any grants. She replied that she applied every year, including this year, but did not expect to receive any. She commented that the first firefighter to enter the fire should have the camera because a fast response usually kept the damage to a room. On the subject of the safety harnesses, the Mayor noted that this was something that the Department had never had before; he wanted to know what other departments in the area were using them. Chief Graham reported that the City of Charleston and Summerville were looking at the harnesses.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to approve the purchase of ten (10) safety harness systems for the FY 2008-2009 budget; Councilman Bettelli seconded.

Councilman Bettelli asked if the volunteer firefighters actually went into burning structures, and the Chief replied that usually they did not.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to remove the Breach Inlet jet ski dock from the FY 2008-2009 Capital Budget; Councilman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mayor Sottile stated that the “jaws of life” that the City owns may be antiquated, but Chief Graham has stated that it was still functional; he asked that the Fire Department continue to use it for another year. The Chief corrected the year of purchase as 1991, not 1999; she then commented that it would not cut through the metal used in newer model automobiles.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to defer replacement of parts for the “jaws of life” equipment until FY 2009-2010; Councilman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was considerable discussion on the purchase of jet skis and Councilman Bettelli was asked to speak to the owner of the jet ski rental tenant at the marina to get an idea of the normal life of this equipment. It was strongly suggested that this equipment be placed on a replacement schedule like other City equipment.

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to purchase one (1) jet ski in FY 2008-2009 and one (1) in FY 2009-2010; Mayor Sottile seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilman Taylor suggested postponing the purchase of the second stair chair until FY 2009-2010.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to delay purchase of a second stair chair until FY 2009-2010; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilman Taylor asked if the purchase of the video library was to train on the island; Chief Graham said that the library would be used for that and for staying current with information and standard changes. In response to the Mayor’s query, the Chief reported that the current library is most outdated.

There were no further comments or questions on the Fire Department Capital Budget.

Administrator Tucker referred the Committee members to page 41 of the budget to look at debt service for the Fire Department.

	<u>Payment</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Hospitality Tax</u>
Fire Station 2 Bond – principal	\$125,000	\$50,000	\$75,000
Fire Station 2 Bond – interest	136,259	54,503	81,755

E. Discussion of Beach Holes/Debris Ordinance

Councilman Bettelli related that he chose to refer to this ordinance as the Safety and Turtle Protection Ordinance. Administrator Tucker reported that it was still in the hands of the City's attorney to clarify the wording.

She also reported that Bill Schupp has submitted a proposal whereby he would fill in the holes on the beach three (3) days per week for ninety-five dollars (\$95.00) per day. The Administrator commented that she would consider using the service from April through September and she thought the expense would be eligible for State Accommodations Taxes. Mayor Sottile noted that he thought the service should be used only during turtle nesting season, May through September.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved for the Public Safety Committee to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee the approval of Mr. Schupp's proposal to fill in holes on the beach three (3) days per week from May through September at a cost of ninety-five dollars (\$95.00) per day; Councilman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

Consideration of Project for Transportation Sales Taxes

Administrator Tucker directed attention to the letter of March 27, 2008 from Charleston County Transportation Development requesting that the City submit its prioritized requests for funding. The Administrator recounted that the City had received funds in the past for the 53rd-57th Avenue drainage project and she expected that request to be repeated. The Committee suggested a couple projects, i.e., to make the bike path along Palm and 41st to 57th Avenue a regulation bike path and the roundabout at 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard intersection.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to submit the 53rd – 57th Avenue Drainage Project and the regulation bike path along Palm and 41st to 57th Avenue for consideration by Charleston County for the Transportation Sales Tax Program; Council Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department: Chief Graham referred the Committee to Page 1 of her report to the March 1 commentary on the injured youth as the most significant event of the month.

Mayor Sottile asked Chief Graham about the eleven (11) violations for which Coconut Joe's had been cited; she confirmed that each was a fire code violation and that Capt. Tetor would follow up in thirty (30) days.

Police Department: Chief Buckhannon reported that on March 11, he and Sgt. O'Donnell had met with all of the rental agents on the island to discuss the short-term rental noise complaints in an effort to be proactive at the beginning of the season. The discussions centered on the noise livability issues throughout the island. The Chief expressed his feeling that it had been a very productive meeting.

Mayor Sottile referenced the Liability Report that showed the majority of problems were occurring in short-term rentals that do not use rental agencies; he wanted to know what movement was being made with that group. Chief Buckhannon explained that, when a complaint was filed, the party at fault was cited and a letter was sent to the property owner detailing what had occurred. If the problem persisted, the owner would be brought to court under the nuisance portion of the ordinance. The Chief stated and the Administrator confirmed that the owners were given all of the information about these ordinances and the penalties when their business licenses were renewed. Administrator Tucker added that complainants were also being informed of actions taken as a result of their filing a complaint.

The Chief related that PFC Schwenk had been awarded Police Officer of the Year by the Exchange Club for his continued proactive enforcement of alcohol related crimes.

Chief Buckhannon also reported that the Department was getting excellent response to the Special Patrol Request program since residents could make the request for a home check via the internet. When the family returns, the Department will send them a report of how many times the officers checked their home.

7. Miscellaneous

Councilman Bettelli asked if Chief Buckhannon could place one of the temporary crosswalk indicators at the 41st Avenue intersection. Chief Buckhannon stated that the Department currently had only enough for the number of crosswalks on the island, but he would purchase an additional one.

Administrator Tucker suggested that a ground breaking for the Public Safety Building take place at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 16, 2008. Mayor Sottile asked a decision be delayed until the Ways and Means Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 15.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 15, 2008.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: There being no further business to come before the Committee, Councilman Buckhannon moved to adjourn at 7:18 p.m.; Mayor Sottile seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk