

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 2, 2011

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Stone and Thomas, Chair Duffy, City Administrator Tucker, Director Pitts, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Duffy 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 Thomas moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting as submitted; Councilmember Stone seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments**

Jim Owens, 2805 Palm Boulevard, asked whether the City had an ordinance prohibiting landscapers from blowing leaves and grass clippings into the streets; Administrator Tucker responded that the City had no ordinance requiring that such debris be vacuumed. However, blowing the leaves or clippings into the storm drains violates the City's storm water ordinance; the problem is that the person much be caught in the act to be charged.

Mr. Owens recalled that he had come before the Committee in the past about overgrowth along the City's sidewalks and, shortly thereafter, a "chain gang" appeared on the island to perform the work. He inquired about which entity was responsible for maintaining the sidewalks. Administrator Tucker stated that the sidewalks are under the purview of SCDOT; the City's Public Works personnel do trim when the workload affords the time. When the City has asked for assistance from Charleston County, they have sent teams of prisoners on work release to trim the sidewalks. The Administrator commented that, if Mr. Owens had specific areas in mind, he could report them, and the City would try to have them trimmed. Mr. Owens wondered whether the City could arrange for prisoners to come to the island on a regular basis to keep the sidewalks trimmed.

4. **Department Reports for February 2011**

Director Pitts reported that personnel had cut and removed a tree felled by a wind storm from Myrtle and 19th Avenue. He noted that the Caterpillar scoop had dropped a valve in the engine, so personnel have been picking up debris by hand, and, to-date, work is on schedule. The equipment is under warranty; the engine is in Columbia, but Director Pitts does not yet know whether the engine will be repaired or replaced. In February, Charleston County completed the storm water work on 27th and 28th Avenue, and Eadie's is continuing to restructure the ditches. Since this meeting is so early in the month, the data needed to complete the garbage reports is not yet available, but the reports will be on the City's website tomorrow.

Administrator Tucker emphasized that the reports and graphs for the Public Works Department were posted each month; she believes that the majority of people are not aware that the website is updated, at least, weekly or that departmental reports are posted each month.

5. Old Business

Update on Drainage Projects

Administrator Tucker announced that the contract for the 53rd to 57th Avenue Drainage Project was signed by the City this week and is in the hands of the vendor for final execution. According to Civil Site Environmental, work will begin on the components of the project that are in the high tourist areas of Wild Dunes. In addition, the Administrator reported that she had reconciled the funding balance for the project with Charleston County regarding the CTC and Transportation Sales Tax grants awarded over the year, and the City's balance agrees with that of Charleston County. Administrator Tucker stated that she expects mobilization very shortly.

Director Pitts reported that Charleston County had used their new camera to inspect covered section of the Sparrow Lane ditch and found that it has deteriorated to the point that the piping has separated. The easiest solution is to slip-line the pipe, and Charleston County is in the process of getting quotes.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of SCE&G Communications Poles

Westy Westmoreland of SCE&G was present to explain the program and to answer questions and/or concerns of the Committee.

Administrator Tucker explained that this activity is related to the work being done around City Hall to provide improved service delivery to the north end of the island. In order for the system to function most efficiently, SCE&G needs a communications tower that would relay information about a problem anywhere along the grid; this communication would identify the problem quickly enough to eliminate a crew from coming to the island for an identification and another crew to come to the island for repairs – one step would be eliminated. The Administrator explained that this transmission system will require a one hundred foot (100 ft.) tower located on Thirteenth Avenue.

Mr. Westmoreland stated that SCE&G has a lot of work happening on the Isle of Palms. The most recent work around City Hall was to bring a fourth circuit onto the island, reducing the number of customers served per line. According to Mr. Westmoreland, the real benefit to the island was that, in certain situations, should service be lost to Wild Dunes or 41st to 57th Avenue, SCE&G can shed load from one circuit to pick up service reducing the length of an outage.

The program brought before the Committee today was another reliability project; Mr. Westmoreland stated that SCE&G always strives to reduce the outage time for its customers and to reduce the number of customers affected by an outage. He explained that the Number One circuit runs from the substation behind City Hall to 41st Avenue; the Number Three circuit runs from 41st Avenue to the end of the island, servicing Dewees, Capers and Bull Islands – approximately seventy percent (70%) of the load on the island. The new project is to put remote switching devices that would enable communication with the SCE&G system from Columbia or Charleston or whatever area was dispatching; SCE&G wants to put one (1) device at 30th and

one (1) at 41st Avenue. Mr. Westmoreland said that the City would not notice any difference at the 41st Avenue location because existing switching is there and they will only be adding communications capabilities. The 30th Avenue location was selected because it is half way on the Number One circuit; 41st Avenue is where the two (2) circuits tie. He explained that, should a problem occur between City Hall and 41st Avenue, SCE&G can tie those circuits and pick up the customers in areas that are not faulted.

Mr. Westmoreland informed the Committee that presently SCE&G can only isolate the "fault," i.e. a tree falls on a line or the underground cable fails, which may be as small as six feet by four feet (6 ft. x 4 ft.) yet disrupts service for all customers on that circuit, by dispatching technicians and line staff to the island to locate it as best they can between two (2) switches. They can turn the breaker on that will feed up to that problem area and close the switch at 41st Avenue which will back feed up to the bad area, reducing the number of customers affected - the switching could take two to three (2-3) hours. With automated switches at 30th and 41st Avenues, if a fault occurs between 13th and 30th Avenue, the switch at 30th could be opened and the switch at 41st could be closed and back feed to 30th Avenue; the number of people affected is dramatically reduced and the action takes minutes instead of hours. The process is illustrated in a drawing identified as Exhibit A attached to the historical record of the meeting.

According to Mr. Westmoreland, the only way to communicate with these switches is via radio signals, and, because of the distance across Hamlin Sound, towers are required on which to mount the antenna. The location selected is next to the substation on 13th Avenue and is shown by a red dot on an aerial photograph marked as Exhibit B attached to the historical record of the meeting. With the structures already in place at the end of 13th on Hamlin Creek, the pole will not be obvious to observers and is far away from residences, yet close to the substation.

In responding to Administrator Tucker's question, Mr. Westmoreland stated that the complication with locating the antenna on the water tower is that the line must come back, hopefully underground, to the substation behind City Hall.

In a project that is currently on the drawing board that would bring another circuit to the island, the tower being discussed at this meeting would come down to be replaced by a structure referred to as a riser (see Exhibit D) on which the antenna would be placed. Mr. Westmoreland explained that the structure is called a riser because it is the location where the underground cables rise up.

Administrator Tucker commented that this SCE&G communications tower would be problematic for the City because there is no provision in the City's Code of Ordinances for a utility tower of this height. In discussions with Mr. Westmoreland, he and the Administrator checked the City's franchise agreement with SCE&G to determine if it contained language specific to poles, and such language is included that suggests SCE&G might be able to move forward. Before advising the Committee about Mr. Westmoreland's project, the Administrator has asked the City Attorney to review the franchise agreement and determine that SCE&G would be allowed to construct this tower under the terms of that agreement.

Chair Duffy asked what the time frame was for the switch project, and Mr. Westmoreland stated that SCE&G has funds available, and the job could be completed in three (3) months.

Administrator Tucker asked whether this new communications tower would create interference with existing signals on the water tower or the new communications tower on 41st; Mr. Westmoreland said that they have never had any issues.

Mr. Westmoreland stated that the franchise agreement is an ordinance; he expressed confidence that the agreement contained the language needed for the pole.

Administrator Tucker indicated to the Committee that they are not expected to act on this pole today.

Before leaving, Mr. Westmoreland stated that survey work was being done currently as SCE&G prepares to underground the lines to Dewees Island.

B. Discussion of CTC and Transportation Sales Tax Requests

Administrator Tucker explained that this has been the source of funds for the 53rd to 57th Avenue Drainage Project, which has been generously supported since 2004; the City has received five hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$550,000) from CTC funds and three hundred thousand dollars (300,000) from the Transportation Sales Tax funds. Other things that the City has received funding for in the past have been the re-surfacing of the bike path on Waterway Boulevard, the 21st Avenue parking expansion for handicapped parking, 21st Avenue sidewalk improvement, the 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard bike path and improvements at 41st Avenue for the three-way stop. The Administrator suggested the engineering for the 44th to 52nd Drainage project as the primary request for 2012; she reminded the Committee that this project was an item in the long-range plan for Public Works.

Chair Duffy agreed that the first priority should be engineering for the next phase in solving the island's drainage needs; he thought the paving of Cassina Drive should next and some bike path on the island. Administrator Tucker suggested improvements to the bike path between 41st and 57th Avenue to make it a multi-use path, a wider path that has designations for both bikers and pedestrians. The Committee concurred with the options set forth by the Administrator.

The deadline for the requests for CTC and Transportation Sales Tax funds in March 18; the Administrator stated that she would present these recommendations to the Public Safety Committee for their input as well.

C. Review of Operating Budget for FY 2011-2012

Assistant Dziuban commented that both the operating and capital budgets had been in meeting packets; this version of the capital budget contains the changes made in February.

Wages and salaries	410,987
Overtime wages	7,652
FICA expense	32,026
Retirement expense	39,310
Workers Compensation	19,865

Wages include a 3% merit pool and other lines are factored of that increase.

Employee health insurance	56,940
Reflects reduction in estimated premium with the State Health Plan.	
Vehicle fuel and oil	96,400
Based on 12 months' usage and an estimate \$4/gallon for both diesel and unleaded.	
Electricity and gas	73,000
Telephone and cable	7,440
Water and sewer	2,500
Based on most recent 12 months' actual.	
Maintenance and service contracts	5,930
Increased to reflect Public Works' share of global firewall and anti-virus protection and cost of fuel filters for fuel island.	
LTD insurance	-0-
Cost included in premium from State Health Plan.	
Contracted Services	25,160
Reduction in number of truckloads going to 4B related to the ordinance disallowing plastic bags.	

Overall, the operating budget for Public Works in FY12 as presented has a negligible change from FY11.

Councilmember Stone questioned Director Pitts about the time frame that the City provided twice a week garbage collections; the Director responded that the change starts the Monday following Memorial Day through the Monday following Labor Day. Based on the Councilmember's calculations, wages, temporary labor and related costs compose sixty-seven percent (67%) of the Public Works budget, and he asked whether that could be reduced in some way. Councilmember Stone concluded that if all City budgets maintain the same, like the Public Works budget, the City will need to draw from reserves in FY12 to balance the budget as it did in FY11.

Councilmember Stone inquired about whether "justification (existed) for cutting back on some of the double pick-ups." Director Pitts responded that if personnel were reduced, overtime would be necessary to get the work done; currently the Department uses five (5) temporary persons, one (1) per truck.

Councilmember Stone re-phrased his question to ask whether the twice weekly pickups were the reason the City hires temporary workers; the Director stated that the City has eight (8) trucks with one (1) driver, and the temporary labor is made up of men on the back of the truck. Director Pitts remarked that the full-time employees in the Department are CDL drivers, but they must aid the personnel on the back of the truck because the number of temporary helpers has been reduced from eight (8) in years past to five (5). Chair Duffy added that one full-time position had been eliminated last year.

Councilmember Stone noted that the tonnage has been getting lower each month, so he thought that would relate to a reduction in staffing needs. Director Pitts countered that the volume may be declining but the number of households to be serviced remains the same.

Administrator Tucker commented that, if the personnel were not involved in a second garbage collection during peak season, they would be expand on other work that is done only as time allows, such as maintaining the beach accesses. The Administrator added that, “yes, the biggest expense to the City of Isle of Palms is personnel, and that is because what the City does for its residents is a service industry – that is what we do. A service industry requires people; that is the most important part of what we do. . . We do not need someone on the payroll that does not have multiple work tasks assigned to them, and most do.”

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

7. Miscellaneous Business

Chair Duffy stated that the Public Works Director should communicate any concerns about the potential parking plan and its impact on the services provided by the Public Works Department to the City Administrator, to the Planning Commission and, ultimately, to City Council. Director Pitts commented that the shuttle truck travels down the right-of-way, so parking there would create a problem for his staff; the efficiency, i.e. the length of the route would be impacted.

Director Pitts reported that the yellow trash barrels have arrived and will get another coat of paint before the palm tree stencil is applied; he stated that he has not heard from the Garden Club about filling them in. Councilmember Stone suggested that the Director contact the Exchange Club; he thought they would be willing to assist.

Next meeting date: 4 p.m., Wednesday, April 6, 2011.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Stone moved to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.; Chair Duffy seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk