

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

5:00 p.m., Monday, April 8, 2013

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:00 p.m., Monday, April 8, 2013 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Bergwerf, Mayor Cronin, 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: Mayor Cronin moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 12, 2013 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Tom Gear had indicated that he wanted to speak, but declined to do so when called upon.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of Enforcement of Roll-out Cart Ordinance

Chair Bettelli recalled that, when the ordinance was discussed at the March City Council meeting, the focus switched from recycling bins in the rights-of-way to the section of the ordinance that states the following:

"Except for such times when lawfully placed for collection, no garbage carts or recycling containers shall be allowed to remain clearly visible from a street, road or right-of-way."

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that the ordinance definitely needed to be re-worked and noted that virtually every recycling bin at the Recreation Center is visible from the road and should be openly visible to encourage use. Chair Bettelli agreed, but added that the City does not want its residents and/or visitors to leave the garbage containers in the rights-of-way.

Chief Buckhannon remarked that situations exist on the island where it is impossible for a resident to hide his/her garbage container, for example residents living on corners where at least three (3) sides of the house are visible from the street. As for enforcement, officers only warn those residents who obviously make no effort to hide their containers.

Mayor Cronin asked whether staff knew what other municipalities do to handle this problem.

Chair Bettelli noted that one (1) thing that adds to the problem is that, at a point in the City's history, it encouraged residents to construct corrals in the rights-of-way to house their garbage containers, and, now between the City's roll-out carts and the recycling bins, the corrals are not large enough to hold them.

Councilmember Bergwerf voiced her understanding that the corrals had been constructed when garbage cans, not roll-out carts, had to be dragged to the street for pickup; therefore, with the move to roll-out carts, the rationale for corrals has disappeared.

Chair Bettelli agreed and added that the City needs to devise a plan to encourage residents to get rid of the corrals.

Councilmember Bergwerf summed up the conversation to this point that the corrals are out-of-date, generally in poor condition and in the rights-of-way and that the Recreation Center and other City buildings are not in compliance with ordinance as it reads today. The ordinance needs to be tweaked so that all City-owned properties can be in compliance without discouraging recycling.

Mayor Cronin added that, with the addition of the larger, new recycling containers, the corrals are not large enough to hold them.

From her reading of historical files, Administrator Tucker explained that, when the City went from service all the way to the home to curb-side pickup, the concession was made to the garbage corrals, and the City actually provided design plans to residents for the corrals. The Administrator noted that there were more issues than recycling containers to be addressed by the ordinance.

With a consensus from the Committee, Chair Bettelli stated that Council should delay a Second Reading on the ordinance until the City learns more about what other local governments are doing to keep garbage/recycling containers out of the rights-of-way and to enforce the regulations fairly. The Committee should also consider a point in the future when the corrals should be removed from the rights-of-way. Discussion will continue at the May meeting.

Administrator Tucker related a telephone call from a resident suggesting a change in the recycling day to Monday, eliminating a third day for residents to remember or contract for moving a cart – one part of the island would be putting their recycling out as they remove their garbage roll-out cart from the right-of-way and the other part of the island would be removing the recycling bin from the right-of-way as they are putting the garbage roll-out cart to be picked up. Although the Committee did not think it likely that Charleston County would change the schedule, all agreed that it was worth a phone call to make the request.

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that, in addition, she would like to see the City have weekly recycling.

B. Update on Signs – Consideration of using balanced of sign fabrication budget to purchase “No Parking on Pavement” signs for northeast end of the island

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that the City had budgeted twenty-thousand dollars (\$20,000) for wayfinding sign fabrication and the bid came in at less than fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000). When Barb Gobien spoke at the March Council meeting, the Administrator stated that she was reminded that the City needed to get the promised “No

Parking on Pavement” signs installed on streets on the northeast end of the island and that there was this amount of money available. In addition, the Administrator thought it would be good to have the new signs reflecting the motif of the wayfinding signs upon which the City has agreed.

With the Committee’s approval, the Administrator was proposing to same sign fabricator to produce the “No Parking on Pavement” sign with the balance of the money. Chair Bettelli stated that by doing this, SCDOT could see proof of the City’s dedication to transition all signs on the island to the newly approved wayfinding style.

Mayor Cronin inquired about whether or not the City would need a new permit, and the Administrator said a new permit would be necessary, but she thought it would be expeditiously approved.

Chief Buckhannon explained that SCDOT will require that the signs meet regulatory standards as to height, shape, wording, etc.

Mayor Cronin then asked how many signs the City could get for five thousand dollars (\$5,000), and Administrator Tucker stated that she did not know at this moment.

MOTION: Mayor Cronin moved to use the balance of the budget for wayfinding sign fabrication to get as many as “No Parking on Pavement” signs as possible; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of deployment of quick response vehicles for medical calls

Administrator Tucker explained that idea of extending the life of fire apparatus to reduce the amount of annual savings reserve came up during budget discussions; a Councilmember had been reading about the annual savings Mount Pleasant was experiencing since they began using quick response vehicles (QRVs).

Chief Graham gave a brief presentation on how a QRV would reduce mileage and maintenance costs on fire apparatus and increase flexibility and maneuverability in congested areas. (A copy of the handout is attached to the historical record of the meeting.)

A key to the presentation was that, for the City to transition to using a QRV more than just purchasing a vehicle is required; it also means increasing staff by two (2) firefighters/EMTs per shift, of which there are three (3). The staffing additions would be necessary to ensure that the Fire Department could respond to a fire emergency with the required number of personnel at the same time that the QRV is deployed to a medical call.

Costs to the City for one (1) quick response vehicle and staffing are estimated at

1 fully equipped vehicle	\$ 50,000
6 firefighters/EMTs with benefits	237,307
6 sets of uniforms, gear, physicals, etc.	<u>18,000</u>
Total	\$ 305,307

Administrator Tucker reiterated the fact that, since the Fire Department has limited personnel, additional personnel would be required should the City decide to embrace the use of QRVs. On the other hand, the Administrator pointed to positive benefits to be gained, for instance, maneuvering the large apparatus during the congested beach season is very challenging and comments from residents about having a full complement of fire apparatus arrive for a minor medical call, which might prevent some residents from making the 911 call. Mayor Cronin noted that active staff cannot be separated from the equipment.

Captain Tetor stated that he had researched the fuel savings from using a QRV that will be twelve to sixteen (12-16) miles per gallon as opposed to ladder truck that gets four to six (4-6) miles per gallon. There would be additional savings in tire replacements on a QRV versus a ladder or pumper truck.

Mayor Cronin stated that this presentation needs to be made at Ways and Means so that all of Council will understand full picture; in addition, staff needs to have information on how much the useful life of fire apparatus could be extended, the estimated savings on fuel costs, and the impact on the estimated savings reserve from extending the life of fire apparatus.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked whether the firefighters hired to staff the QRV would have different or more extensive training than the firefighters currently employed. Chief Graham explained that all firefighters are encouraged, but not required, to get EMT training; new hires would be firefighters/EMTs.

For the record, Administrator Tucker stated that, if the City is going to move in this direction, it will be necessary to modify the areas of the budget that would be affected by it; none of the costs presented have been incorporated into the budget.

B. Discussion of hours dogs are allowed off-leash on the beach

Chair Bettelli stated that dogs are allowed to be off-leash on the beach between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. from April 1st through September 14th and from 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. from September 15th through March 31st.

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that several residents had asked her if the time could be extended to 9:00 a.m., and she thought it reasonable to do so.

Mayor Cronin asked Chief Buckhannon if a change would create a problem for Animal Control; the Chief responded that the officers would enforce whatever Council wants. The Chief added that the Isle of Palms is the most liberal and friendly area beach community relative to dogs on

the beach; Folly Beach and Sullivan's Island do not allow dogs on the beach between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; and dogs are never allowed on the beach off-leash at Folly Beach.

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to amend the ordinance to allow dogs on the beach off-leash from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. from April 1st through September 14th; Mayor Cronin seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mayor Cronin stated that he would act to go back to 8:00 a.m. if the City gets complaints.

C. Consideration of budgeted purchase of waverunner for Fire Department

Chief Graham explained that she does not have an exact price because there is a good chance that the City can get a discount of five hundred dollars (\$500) for her attendance at an in-water show in May. The waverunner to be replaced is a Yamaha, but the Chief is leaning toward replacing it with a Seadoo.

Chief Graham stated that the budget for replacement is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), but she would like to be allowed to spend as much as ten thousand five hundred dollars (\$10,500) to be able to buy the waverunner at the demonstration; the vendor will be Charleston Powersports.

MOTION: Mayor Cronin moved to recommend to Ways and Means to authorize the budgeted purchase of a waverunner in an amount not to exceed \$10,500 from Charleston Powersports; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Discussion of residential fire suppression systems

Administrator Tucker thanked Bill Jenkins from the IOP Water and Sewer Commission for attending the meeting to provide the Committee with relevant information on the subject.

The Administrator learned from a salesman who visited her that there are two (2) types of fire suppression systems available for residences, and they are as follows:

- The first is a sprinkler system that the Fire Department connects to outside the residence and activates the system; this system would be on a separate water connection to the home;
- The second is a sprinkler system that connects to the main water line that serves the residence.

The salesman who met with the Administrator sells the second type and informed her that the IOP Water and Sewer Commission will not authorize a separate meter for the system he sells. The reasoning behind this is that, if the water is turned off to the residence for whatever reason, the fire suppression system is not affected since it is on a separate line.

This sales person is calling on residents trying to sell his system and some discussion is taking place in the legislature, so Administrator Tucker wanted the Committee to be knowledgeable if questioned by residents.

Chair Bettelli asked Mr. Jenkins about the cost to the homeowner to get a separate meter for the system. Mr. Jenkins stated that the Water and Sewer Commission does not meter for water used in fire suppression, but they do provide a separate tap and the cost is for the labor and materials. For a one inch (1 in.) line, the cost is approximately eight hundred eleven dollars (\$811) with an annual fee of thirty dollars (\$30) for having the tap in place.

Mr. Jenkins said that the Water and Sewer Commission's policy is to require a separate connection for sprinkler systems, but they do not meter. When the Water and Sewer Commission installs a tap for fire suppression, nothing else in the house is connected to that line.

Captain Tetor commented that he had attended a residential sprinkler class in January and noted that two (2) water lines should go into structures that have fire suppression systems as Mr. Jenkins noted. He indicated that South Carolina has no strong legislation on mandating fire suppression system installation, only recommendations.

Mr. Jenkins reported that the Legislature does allow the systems that connect to the main water line going into the residence to be installed in South Carolina and the Fire Marshall has approved them. According to the State Fire Marshall, these systems are not fire suppression systems, but life safety systems that give the residents time to escape the fire, but not necessarily put out the fire.

E. Review of FY14 budgets for Fire and Police Departments

Police Department – Operating

Administrator Tucker noted that the Police Department FY14 operating budget as presented shows a ten percent (10%) increase over FY13; if the expenses related to the transition to Consolidated Dispatch were removed, the Police Department would decrease from FY13. The contracted expense to Consolidated Dispatch will decline annually until FY17 when the City's financial obligation has been met. The FY14 budget does contemplate maintaining a 24/7 dispatch presence on the island for the first year of the transition; they will answer the non-emergency lines, respond to the ten minute hits on warrants and monitor 911 calls from the island going to Consolidated Dispatch to intervene on a call going awry. A second item impacting the Police Department budget is that the coming year is a CALEA re-accreditation year; the conference will be on the west coast, and, typically, the Mayor, Chair of Public Safety, Police Chief, City CALEA manager and City Administrator attend. In general, the Police Department budget is stable with several lines decreasing.

Parking Meter Department

The Administrator noted that the City will again employ six (6) Beach Service Officers, which is up from four (4); the added expense will be offset by a grant from Charleston County for forty thousand dollars (\$40,000), while the balance of expense will be paid equally from Municipal Accommodations and Hospitality taxes.

Capital Projects – Police Department

In addition to replacing two (2) laptops for twenty-eight hundred dollars (\$2,800); fifty-nine thousand five hundred dollars (\$59,500) has been budgeted to replace one (1) four-wheel drive patrol vehicle, to replace the server and to replace the recording equipment for non-emergency dispatch, if it fails.

Municipal Accommodations Fee - Revenue

Appearing here is the transfer to pay for one (1) full-time position in the Police Department.

Police Department

Items being funded from here include one in-car digital camera, two (2) mobile data terminals, one (1) four-wheel drive patrol vehicle and one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for the implementation of beach access parking solutions.

Although staff and Council do not know what kind of parking solutions the City might pursue, a total of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) is in the FY14 budget to put a plan into action.

Front Beach

Expenses that can be attributed to the Police Department in this cost center are uniforms for BSOs, the annual subscription for the internet-based parking ticket management system, the annual service for locating the addresses of unpaid violators and the armored car service.

Hospitality Fund Expenditures – Police Department

A new implementation for the Department, the use of tasers, is funded here, as well as another one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for implementation of a parking management system, the replacement of one (1) patrol sedan and the front beach surveillance system.

On the subject of tasers, Administrator Tucker commented that the Chief has been reluctant to go to tasers for several reasons, such as no information on the impact on people who are tazed, but the City hopes to reduce the possibilities of injury to officers by reducing the need for close contact with perpetrators. When an officer uses OC spray, he must be de-contaminated which means he/she is out of service while showering and changing uniforms.

Mayor Cronin asked if there was taser training, and Chief Buckhannon said the officers would be trained in how to administer the taser and in the maintenance of the taser units themselves.

State Accommodations Tax Expenditures – Police Department

Budgeted to be paid from this fund is the annual replacement of body armor and another new item, body-worn digital cameras; these cameras will provide a record of officer activities when they are outside of their vehicles, other than field sobriety tests performed in front of the vehicle.

They will provide another layer of protection for officers. State ATAX will fund the last one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for parking management implementation and a third four-wheel drive patrol vehicle.

Victim's Assistance Revenue Fund

Administrator Tucker stated that this fund is capitalized through court assessments specifically for victim's assistance. The City anticipates receiving seventy-seven hundred dollars (\$7,700) in revenue for FY13 based on the actual receipts through eight (8) months of FY13.

A transfer from this fund pays fifty percent (50%) of the Victim Advocates salary and benefits. Expenditures are items that support that position, i.e. membership and dues, telephone and cable and printing and office supplies.

Based on the fund balance, Mayor Cronin commented that FY14 would be the last year that the Victim Advocate's position can be supported by this fund; the Administrator agreed that was the case unless there is an increase in the cases that appear in court.

Capital and Special Projects – Police Department

The majority of these items have already been discussed; this schedule details the capital purchases by the funding source. The one (1) item not seen is the reservation of fund balance for the anticipated radio replacement in FY17 for one hundred sixteen thousand six hundred sixty-seven dollars (\$116,667); the Capital Projects fund will pay fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost with the balance spread evenly between Municipal and State Accommodations taxes.

The following page captures on one (1) sheet the expenses related to Consolidated Dispatch; these also were discussed earlier.

Fire Department – Operating

According to Administrator Tucker, the bulk of the four percent (4%) increase in the Fire Department is attributable to the three percent (3%) merit pool and part-time wages, some of which is offset by transfers-in from the tourism funds because the majority of part-time wages are incurred in the April through September.

The Administrator noted that twelve (12) of the twenty-eight (28) lines in this budget remain the same as in FY13 and some have been reduced based on actual. Vehicle fuel and oil has been reduced based on usage and would be further adjusted if the City goes to QRVs. Vehicle maintenance has been increased due to the fact that vehicles must now be taken off island for maintenance; the increase is five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The maintenance and service contracts line was decreased slightly while the cleaning and sanitary supplies line has been increased based on actual. As stated earlier, all departments are seeing an increase in property and liability and flood insurance.

Capital Projects Expenditures – Fire Department

Again Administrator Tucker noted that all capital leases in the Fire Department have been paid off. Items funded from Capital Projects are the replacement of two (2) laptops, two (2) items related to consolidated dispatch, the retainage on the Public Safety Building and a porta-court machine for SCBA mask fit testing.

Municipal Accommodations Fee Transfers – Fire Department

Funds are transferred to cover the wages for two (2) full-time positions in the Fire Department.

Municipal Accommodations Fee Expenditures – Fire Department

The only item here is the purchase of one (1) mobile radio repeater at twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000).

Mayor Cronin asked if this addition would put a repeater on every truck; Chief Graham explained that the repeaters would be on the ladder trucks.

Hospitality Tax Expenditures – Fire Department

Annual replacements of SCBA air packs/cylinders, bunker gear and fire hose are purchased using these tourism funds. In addition, the budget includes the replacement of the motor for the large Zodiac boat.

Chief Graham explained that, although the boat was new when it was purchased, the motor was refurbished to keep the costs within budget. The motor has started to have mechanical problems; therefore, the Chief wants to replace it before it becomes unreliable since it is the boat used for ocean rescues.

Volunteer Fire 1% Fund

Administrator Tucker explained that this fund is not one that the City or the Public Safety Committee has any purview over and that it is capitalized by one percent (1%) of the fire insurance premiums homeowners pay which are returned to the Fire Department. The City's fire personnel spend approximately eighty-five percent (85%) of this money on supplemental insurance and retirement; they can also use the funds for entertainment purposes within the department. Chief Graham added that there are very strict guidelines that must be adhered to regarding the use of these funds.

Mayor Cronin noted that the estimated revenue for FY14 is down from prior years; the Administrator stated that she suspects that residents are choosing to have higher deductibles to reduce the cost of insurance in tight economic times.

State Accommodations Tax – Fire Department

The Administrator repeated that money is transferred out of this fund to pay for part-time wages for personnel for the period April through September. Also to be funded from State ATAX are an additional mobile repeater, a jet ski, an ATV for beach patrol and the replacement of the Ford F-150; these items total sixty-six thousand dollars (\$66,000).

Capital Projects – Fire Department

This budget shows capital purchases by funding source. In addition, this budget defines the assignment of fund balance for future capital purchases established for FY14; they are three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) for the replacement of one (1) rescue truck, two (2) ladder trucks and two (2) pumper trucks and one hundred thirty-three thousand dollars (\$133,000) for the Fire Department's share of the anticipated FY17 replacement of radios.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

The Chief reported that personnel responded to a call on March 31st about a black lab in distress in Breach Inlet; the dog would have drowned had it not been rescued. During the month of March, personnel responded to sixty-three (63) calls, of which thirty (30) were EMS calls. One (1) EMS call rated as a medium priority had a response time in excess of twenty (20) minutes; the Chief will research the reason for the delay. Fire Inspector Kunitzer performed twelve (12) inspections and found fourteen (14) violations. Chief Graham stated that the Fire Inspector has been actively involved in the construction process at 1501 Palm Boulevard. The Chief reported that a wide variety of training was conducted during the month and that she had attended the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans and found it to be most informative and relevant. The Isle of Palms is involved with the Charleston Area Joint Recruit School, and Battalion Chief Maibach is serving as the coordinator for the program. Coordinating with the Recreation Department, the BOSU trainer is coming to Station 1 for workouts; the attendance is high and everyone is enjoying the workouts. In public relations, personnel helped a resident getting back into bed, helped a resident get comfortable in bed, assisted a handicapped visitor to and from the beach on multiple occasions and assisted a resident on 56th Avenue remove their car from the garage.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

The Chief recounted an incident from March 25th that involved a golf cart being operated by two (2) minors who had alcoholic beverages in the cart as well as a stolen golf course flag from Wild Dunes. Under the heading of "Community Service/Crime Prevention," Chief Buckhannon reported that police personnel are working with the rental agencies on the island tagging electronic equipment inside rental properties then entering the information into a data base operated by the Police Department; the program is being well-received by the agencies. The "Meet and Greet" held on March 21st was well attended and generated good feedback. Personnel attended the Annual Wild Dunes Homeowners Association meeting and distributed informational pamphlets. During the month of March, dispatchers responded to three thousand

six hundred sixty (3,660) calls, of which three thousand one hundred fourteen (3,114) were for the Police Department. Officers made three hundred sixty-four (364) traffic stops that generated seventy-six (76) citations. One hundred twenty-eight (128) incident reports were written in March; the island has experienced fourteen (14) burglaries year-to-date. The burglaries are happening mainly in rental homes and flat screen TVs are being taken. The majority of the twenty-four (24) arrests in the month were traffic offenses, either DUIs or driving under suspension. One (1) officer has completed the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in March; he is undergoing field training now that should be completed by the first or second week in May.

When asked whether the department was now fully staffed, Chief Buckhannon indicated that the department was one (1) officer short.

In the livability area, nine (9) noise complaints were lodged in the month that generated one (1) citation and four (4) warnings.

Chair Bettelli noted that the island has a new business that rents scooters/mopeds; he asked if any type of license was required of drivers. The Chief said that no license is required to operate a moped and noted that they are very popular in beach communities.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Another Police Department "Meet and Greet" will be held from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 25th at the corner of Forest Trail and 34th Avenue for residents of Forest Trail, Forest Trail Courts I and II and Cross Lane.

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, May 13th in the City Hall Conference Room.

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Mayor Cronin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk