

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:00 p.m., Monday, January 13, 2014

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 13, 2014 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Bettelli and Carroll, 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. Administrator Tucker called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public had been notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Administrator Tucker opened the floor for nominations for Committee Chair; Councilmember Bergwerf nominated Councilmember Bettelli for Chair. Councilmember Carroll seconded and the voting was unanimous in favor of Councilmember Bettelli.

Chair Bettelli called for nominations for Vice Chair, and Chair Bettelli nominated Councilmember Bergwerf for Vice Chair. Councilmember Carroll seconded, and Councilmember Bergwerf was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 11, 2013 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Citizens' Comments** – None

5. **Old Business**

A. Update on Beach Access Parking and Wayfinding Signs – Stantec

Rick Day of Stantec was present to update the Committee on progress with beach access parking and wayfinding signs. On the first of three (3) tasks, the parking permit feasibility, Stantec will base its estimate on the allowable number of parking permits/passes on the capacity of the streets and what can be managed in peak season; they expect to do the field work, i.e. parking surveys, for this project on Memorial Day, July 4th and follow-up on Labor Day – the busiest traffic days for the island. Currently they are studying the programs in other beach communities across the country to determine what works and what can be applied to the Isle of Palms. Stantec anticipates completing this task by the end of the year.

Councilmember Carroll referenced the growth in Mount Pleasant over coming years and asked whether Stantec was taking that information into consideration as they look into a parking pass/permit program for the island. Mr. Day responded that Stantec has to look at that data, but they must first satisfy the Beach Management Plan in terms of public parking and determine the level of parking that can be safely managed on the island.

A second facet of Stantec's work is to determine what the available right-of-way is on each road on the island and then what streets have enough right-of-way to implement the four foot (4 ft.) offset and still safely park. Using the GIS process, they have mapped all of the streets on the island to determine the available right-of-way from the edge of the pavement to the right-of-way line and identified them into the following categories based on the fact that it takes a minimum of eight feet (8 ft.) to park an automobile:

1. Roads with less than eight feet (8 ft.) of right-of-way;
2. Roads with eight to fourteen feet (8-14 ft.) of right-of-way; and
3. Roads with sixteen feet (16 ft.) of right-of-way.

The roads with rights-of-way of sixteen feet (16 ft.) are the most desirable for parking; they allow for the four foot (4 ft.) offset, eight feet (8 ft.) for the vehicle and an additional four feet (4 ft.) for opening the doors for safe exit without being on private property.

With this information, they are beginning to develop this road identification to know how many parking spaces are available on the island.

Administrator Tucker asked if their mapping also identified obstructions in the rights-of-way – the third task for Stantec, and Mr. Day responded that the field work had been done to locate the obstructions, but they had not yet been overlaid with the GIS mapping. Based on their field work, there are more than six hundred (600) properties with obstructions in the rights-of-way. Another item of research is to know which of the six hundred (600) properties were granted encroachments permits by SCDOT.

Councilmember Carroll asked what redress the City had for those properties with an encroachment permit; the Administrator responded that the City cannot take action against these property owners, only SCDOT can act.

Mr. Day reported that he anticipates have Tasks Two and Three will be completed by the end of February and will be back on the agenda in March.

Chief Buckhannon asked Mr. Day if Stantec had been successful in identifying the private roads on the island. Mr. Day explained that they have located each road on the island and placed it in a matrix that, based on the source documents, identifies the road as state, city or private. The source documents being used are (1) SCDOT's official GIS data, (2) an e-mail from Charleston County dated February 4th relative to road maintenance and what roads are City roads and what roads are DOT roads, (3) a letter from Robert Clark of SCDOT dated September 17th with an opinion on road ownership, (4) an attorney's letter dated April 21, 2004 and Court papers filed in 2007 specifically about certain roads. Each source was checked for each road on the island, and there are quite a few with conflicting opinions. Mr. Day's next step will be to meet again with SCDOT seeking a final resolution.

B. Update on Message Boards – Stantec

Marie Langlois of Stantec was present to address the status of electronic message boards for the foot of the Connector and Breach Inlet. Ms. Langlois informed the Committee that Stantec has submitted the application for the encroachment permit for the two (2) boards after the final

design was approved; a design for the proposed message boards was included in meeting packets. She stated that she had spoken with the SCDOT reviewer earlier in the day to explain that Stantec was trying to expedite the permitting process and will continue to do so until the permit is issued. While the permitting process is underway, Stantec is preparing the construction documents that will go into the bid package; the plan is for the construction documents to be ready by the time the permit is issued.

Relative to the digital display board, the Recreation Department staff provided Ms. Langlois with the quotes they received in the past; these quotes detail the specific needs that must be satisfied by the new message boards. Ms. Langlois reported that she has contacted some manufacturers directly and given them different options; she believes that certain of the previous quotes were high and more sophisticated than the City needs.

A brief discussion ensued relative to raised versus recessed letters; Ms. Langlois stated that the reflective paint holds up longer when the letters are recessed and to change to raised lettering would increase the cost.

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that this project was nearing its budget ceiling and that there are other issues that have to be considered that were not figured into the original budget estimates.

Ms. Langlois confirmed that the message on the digital board can be changed remotely.

Chief Graham was concerned that the digital messaging boards would withstand the corrosive marine environment. From initial inquiries a couple of years ago, Director Page assured the Chief that the types of sign being considered are used in other beach communities and will withstand the elements.

C. Discussion of Additional Fire Department Staffing at Fire Station 2

Administrator Tucker recalled that additional staffing for Station 2 was originally discussed last year, but that City Council has opted to address pay increases for the Department, but not additional employees to equalize the staffing at Station 2. The Administrator believes that this Committee and Council should not lose sight of this concern and should continue the momentum that was generated.

Chief Graham took this opportunity to remind the Committee of the reasons for the request for one (1) additional firefighter per shift, a total of three (3) employees. The Chief reported that Fire Station 2 is getting more serious calls in District 2, the area from 32nd Avenue to Dewees Inlet. In a traditional fire call, the most senior officer should be the incident commander, but, having only four (4) firefighters assigned to Station 2 could mean that the most senior person is at the hydrant and not able to function as the incident commander for several minutes as additional personnel are in route. Adding one (1) person per shift would put the City's Department closer to meeting National Fire Protection Association's standards; the Chief also pointed out that an additional person per shift would reduce wear and tear on the engine and lengthen the time for tire replacement.

Councilmember Bergwerf reiterated her support for the Department's request and repeated the sentiment of several Councilmembers that this action should wait until the new budget year that begins next month.

Councilmember Carroll voiced his support for this action and finding a way to make it happen as the City goes into the FY15 budget cycle.

Administrator Tucker explained that, if this action goes through the process to be funded in FY15, no hiring will take place until after July 1, 2014, which will mean that the City will go through another beach season without already hired and trained additional personnel for Fire Station 2. Under these circumstances, the City is looking at not having a trained complement of an equivalent number of people at each station until the end of the summer, missing the peak time when personnel are running a large number of water and medical calls on that end of the island.

The Administrator added that the need for an additional person per shift was the original problem that the Fire Department brought to the Personnel Committee for consideration; the other issues grew out of the evolving discussions. The Administrator stated that, in her thoughts, this action would occur before anything else and she has since questioned that she should have provided more guidance to ensure that it did.

Councilmember Carroll turned the question to Chief Graham as to what her priority was of the three (3) requests made to City Council, and she responded that her Number One priority was additional personnel for safety reasons. The need for pay increases grew from the issues of being able to retain existing personnel and to attract quality people in the future. The Chief reported that the Fire Department has generated more overtime this fiscal year than in the past; although the Department does have part-time people on staff for assistance in the summertime, it is difficult to get them to commit to the peak of the day on a Saturday or Sunday. The Department was, therefore, paying more full-time personnel overtime to compensate.

Chair Bettelli asked whether the addition of one (1) person per shift would reduce overtime, and the Chief responded that it would reduce overtime by one (1) person since, frequently in the summer, two (2) additional people are needed on a weekend.

Chief Graham stated that, if the City wants to see the benefit of an additional person per shift, the hiring process must begin before July 1. Councilmember Bergwerf noted that the City was looking at a much less significant budgetary impact if the three (3) additional personnel were brought on in April or May to have them on the street before the summer crush is in full swing.

Chair Bettelli voiced the Committee's consensus opinion that the subject needed consideration a second time before the full Council at the Ways and Means Committee meeting.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of FY15 Budget Process

The Administrator commented that this subject was on the agenda of all standing committee meetings because the budget process has historically started with February meetings. Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that the process begins with a review of the ten-year capital plan to determine what is to be replaced in FY15, what can be deferred to a future year and what is to be added; from that listing, the capital budgets are generated. After committees consider the capital budgets, the operating budgets are presented for the same type of scrutiny, and finally staff offers the revenue budgets that have been meshed with the capital and operating budgets.

Based on comments staff members have heard in the last couple of budget cycles, staff is interested in involving Council more and giving them more ownership in budgetary decisions. Staff has traditionally presented a balanced budget to City Council, but now questions that Council would prefer to make more decisions about which funds pay for which expenditures.

Chair Bettelli remarked that he would like to see revenues introduced earlier in the process.

Administrator Tucker encouraged the Committee members to contact her about changes they would like to see in the budget process.

B. Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000

Award of sole source contract to Lawmen's Police Safety Supply for the budgeted purchase of 17 X26P tasers and accessories in the amount of \$15,950.28 (Budget - \$16,000)

Chief Buckhannon explained that this is a sole source contract because there is only one (1) manufacturer of tasers and that manufacturer has one (1) distributor in the area.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend the award of a sole source contract to Lawmen's Police Safety Supply for 17 X26P tasers and accessories in the amount of \$15,950.28; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Acknowledgement of FirstNet

Administrator Tucker explained that this is on the agenda to make the Committee aware of this effort, on a national level, to have a consolidated dispatch system. The Administrator said that this is a state-by-state decision-making process, but, if states do not opt in by a certain date, it will be forced on the states in a different manner and cost more money. Administrator Tucker indicated that she had contacted the Consolidated Dispatch people and learned that FirstNet is far from being a reality; presently it appears to be in the meetings stage, and South Carolina does have a representative attending these meetings who confirms that FirstNet is far in the future.

7. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

On November 16th, 2013, personnel responded to a boat that had sunk near the docks on Morgan Cove; personnel worked with the Coast Guard with the fuel spill cleanup. On November 28th personnel responded to smoke in the area of Live Oak Drive that turned out to be a turkey frying. In the month of November, personnel responded to forty-six (46) calls, and twenty-five (25) were for EMS. Seven (7) fire inspections were done in the month where seven (7) violations were found. A variety of vehicle maintenance was done, but nothing of significance. On January 30th, the calls from Consolidated Dispatch will be synthesized and sound more robotic, but Chief Graham says that the calls are actually clearer because they are spoken more slowly.

On December 4th, personnel responded to a gas leak on Carolina Boulevard; a resident had purchased a new tank and did not realize the tank was open. In the month, personnel responded to forty-three (43) calls, and twenty-seven (27) were for EMS. The Fire Inspector performed eight (8) inspections in the month and found twenty-nine (29) violations. All Department personnel are participating in the City's Wellness Program.

Chair Bettelli asked that the overtime be reported as a percent of budget.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

From November 16 through the end of 2013, the island experienced sixteen (16) break-ins to vehicles; fifteen (15) vehicles were left unlocked. In the month of November, dispatchers handled four thousand seven hundred sixty-seven (4,767) calls; three thousand five hundred thirty (3,530) were for the IOP Police Department. November saw three hundred ninety-eight (398) traffic stops that yielded ninety-three (93) received citations.

In December, dispatchers answered four thousand seven hundred thirty (4,730) calls for a total of fifty-two thousand six hundred fifty-eight (52,658) for the year 2013. In the month, officers made three hundred thirty-two (332) traffic stops and wrote sixty-nine (69) tickets. In the year, officers wrote twenty-one (21) tickets for DUI and three hundred ninety-three (393) speeding tickets. Two (2) officers completed their training at the Criminal Justice Academy and are now in field training on the island; one (1) officer is going through training now at the Academy and should complete in mid-March. In December, officers received eight (8) calls for noise violations and wrote three (3) warnings, but no citations.

Based on Council's actions on right-of-way parking, Chair Bettelli asked Chief Buckhannon to have the patrol officers to be especially vigilant about roll-cart violations. When asked about the garbage can corrals in the rights-of-way, the Administrator responded that it remains in the work queue.

Administrator Tucker announced that the issuance of new hurricane stickers will be processed through the Police Department at the Public Safety Building. The dispatchers have been moved to the Lobby area on the second floor, and they will be sending out the letters and issuing the new stickers; they have been assisting with the naming of the City's digitized files as well.

8. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Monday, February 10, 2014 in the Conference Room.

Chief Buckhannon reported that the Police Department had its on-site CALEA assessment in mid-December; the City will get the results at the middle to the end of February. One of the assessors commented that he had seen an agency that was highly involved with the community. This assessment was the first the City has had toward meeting the requirements of the Gold Standard; the Gold Standard assessment is to highlight areas of concern or improvement and areas of excellence.

Administrator Tucker questioned that the time of year was relevant to the on-site assessment; if the assessors were to come in the beach season, they would see an entirely different island from the one they see in December.

9. Executive Session – not needed

10. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk