

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 3, 2013

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 3, 2013 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Loftus and Ward, Chair Buckhannon, Administrator Tucker, Director Pitts, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Buckhannon 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 Ward moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 7, 2013 as submitted; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

4. **Department Reports for March 2013 – Director Pitts**

Maintenance and Trash Collection Tracking Reports

Director Pitts opened the report noting that the Department had incurred twelve and a half hours (12.5 hrs.) of overtime for pumping on March 24th and twelve hours (12 hrs.) on March 16th for the recycling event. For a second month, pumping was the focus and, the following week, cleaning of the beach access paths continued; the remaining beach paths will be cleaned as weather permits. Vehicle maintenance is in-line with the budget. Garbage was down again, which the Director attributes to single-stream recycling; yard debris was up for the third consecutive month. Director Pitts noted that there is a lot of yard debris in the middle of the island, and he may have to generate overtime on Saturday to get it all collected; Administrator Tucker cautioned him to let the bridge run people get off the island before he deploys personnel.

5. **Old Business**

Review of FY14 Public Works Budgets

Administrator Tucker opened her remarks by stating that the budget as presented does not contemplate a tax increase. As many as twelve (12) of the thirty (30) lines in the FY14 Public Works operating budget remain the same as in the FY13 budget, and seven or eight (7-8) lines actually have been reduced from the FY13 budget – the stability and reductions compensate for those lines that do increase in FY14.

Public Works Operating

In this version of the budget, overtime has been reduced based on additional analysis, and *Vehicle Fuel and Oil* was lowered based on actual usage by the department. Since this budget has twelve month (12 mos.) of the Charleston County radio user's fee, *Telephone and Cable* was increased to reflect that. One thousand dollars (\$1,000) was added to *Water and Sewer* for

the waste water treatment for the runoff from washing the trucks; *Non-capital Tools and Equipment* received a like increase due to the need for the department to purchase additional tools for on-site repairs. *Insurance* is going down, despite the rate increase, due to a change in the allocation between departments based on the inland marine, coverage for mobile equipment, and a reduction in auto liability. Due to a decreased use of 4B as a location for yard debris, *Contracted Services* has been reduced. The operating budget for the Public Works Department has no increase from FY13.

Councilmember Loftus asked Director Pitts if he has a way to secure small tools, and the Director responded that they are maintained in his office which is always locked when he is away and the tool box itself is locked.

Capital Projects

One-third cost of garbage packer	63,000
Replace 2005 Ford F150	29,000
Replace privacy fence	5,000
Access and safety improvements	44,000
Required improvements for stormwater compliance design	20,000
Stormwater compliance construction	120,000

Administrator Tucker noted that the stormwater improvements should be offset by residential stormwater fees from Charleston County.

Drainage contingency	25,000
Placeholder for unexpected small drainage projects	
Eadie's	80,100
Year 4 of 5-year drainage maintenance schedule	

Municipal Accommodations Fee Fund Expenditures

Maintenance and service fees	10,000
Charleston County Solid Waste Disposal fees on Compactor and Schupp dumpsters, right-of-way maintenance	
Street signs	2,000
Rents and leases	2,500
Rent for 1 week annually a skidsteer w/bush hog for beach path maintenance	

Director Pitts indicated that this piece of equipment will do a better job and do it more efficiently. Typically the beach paths get a thorough cleaning twice a year – in the early spring and late summer. The Director said that he had looked into purchasing a skidsteer, but decided it was cost prohibitive at sixty-three thousand dollars (\$63,000).

Island-wide dumpster service	50,000
One-third cost of garbage packer	63,000

Councilmember Ward commented that the use of accommodations fee has increased by thirty-nine percent (39%) for FY14. Administrator Tucker agreed that the fund balances were taking a hit in the FY14 budget, but she also noted that the funds being hit by the City's reservations of fund balance for future purchases look significantly lower, but the reservations of fund balance will continue to be money in the bank.

Chair Buckhannon asked for clarification of funds allocated for signs in both the operating budget and again in the Municipal Accommodations fee budget; the signs purchased from the Municipal Accommodations Fee budget would be in high tourist areas, like Front Beach, while signs purchased from the operating budget are placed in residential areas of the island.

Hospitality Tax Fund Expenditures

Annual City-wide landscaping service (RFB in process)	56,000
100% of street sweeping contract	13,000
MobiMat material to stabilize sand beach accesses	25,000

When asked about the life of MobiMat, Director Pitts stated that the mat at 9th Avenue has been in place for nine (9) years.

State ATAX Fund Expenditures

Miscellaneous and contingency	11,600
Pooper-scoops and pooper-scoop stations, beach trash barrels	
Capital outlay	158,000
Re-budget Front Beach restrooms dune walkover and 1/3 cost of garbage packer	

FY14 Capital and Special Projects

New to the schedule this year is the heading "Assign Fund Balance for Future Expenditures" which lists the following items:

Replace 7 garbage packer trucks and 1 Caterpillar loader	195,000
Complete Phase II Drainage Project (est. cost \$1.4 million)	200,000

Administrator Tucker also noted that seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost of temporary labor in the Public Works Department is paid from the Municipal Accommodations Fee Fund because the staffing up and temporary labor expense are directly correlated to the increase in trash generated by the increased population in the tourist season; this is consistent with prior years. In addition, fifty percent (50%) of the cost of fuel for Public Works is funded from the Municipal Accommodations Fee Fund.

Councilmember Ward noted that there are approximately seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000) in to the General Fund from the tourism funds in the FY14 budget. He asked how much had been approved for the Public Works in capital expenditures in the current year's budget; Administrator Tucker said that the FY13 Public Works capital budget was four hundred sixty-eight thousand nine hundred sixteen dollars (\$468,916). One component of the difference

in transfers in is that in the past only fifty percent (50%) of the temporary labor was paid from Municipal Accommodations Taxes. Councilmember Ward noted that going from capital leases to a reservation of fund balance was a big step, and it was possible that the City could not to put aside the amount of fund balance that it needs to.

Administrator Tucker commented that staff is exploring the use of quick response vehicles, and the Public Safety Committee will hear a presentation next week at their meeting.

Councilmember Loftus asked Director Pitts if the packer to be replaced would last another year; the Director replied that he has extended the life of all of the Public Works vehicles from fourteen (14) years to seventeen (17) years. This particular truck has bed issues with the interior of the packer resulting in weepage; it has been patched, and it could be patched again.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of Flooding on Sparrow Drive

Administrator Tucker reported that, in the recent flash flood, Sparrow had flooded in both the area that has infrastructure and the area that has none. The problem in the area where there is infrastructure was a matter of the high tide which meant that the flapper valve stayed closed – as it should – creating the flooding; as the tide receded, that area drained rather quickly. Charleston County was good to keep a watchful eye on the area where they had installed infrastructure and assured the City that everything was working properly.

The area of Sparrow where Mr. Witt, who wrote the City a letter on the issue, lives lacks infrastructure, and, pursuant to a conversation with Charleston County, Administrator Tucker was reminded that to do what is needed there, the City would likely need easements from some of the residents. The Administrator was told that the City could submit this as a request to the Charleston Transportation Commission and possibly get funding for a small project there.

Chair Buckhannon asked whether the water was deep enough in the area of Mr. Witt's home to be pumped, and Director Pitts responded that it was not and that there were issues with an outfall.

Administrator Tucker stated that she would pull her old files relative to Sparrow Drive; they may hold some answers.

B. Report on response to request for bids for City-wide landscaping

The Administrator reported that the City had gotten a good response for this work, but, with so many bids and with the wide range of the bids, staff is not prepared to make a recommendation at this meeting. At this time, Assistant Dziuban is checking references of the four (4) low bidders, and Director Pitts will be making field trips to actual work sites.

The Committee was assured that staff will have a recommendation for them at the May meeting.

C. Discussion of request to expand yellow barrel trash service to island side of Palm Boulevard

Administrator Tucker recalled that this request has been made before; presently the yellow barrels are at the end of beach access paths on the ocean-side of Palm Boulevard. The resident making the request believes that deploying them on the land side would make visitors less inclined to leave their trash in the right-of-way. To do this will mean an increased number of barrels and likely an increase in fees from the contractor for emptying more barrels.

Councilmember Loftus asked if there was a problem with overflowing yellow barrels now, and Director Pitts said that certain paths had more trash than others. From his point of view, overflowing yellow barrels was more of a problem on Ocean than on Palm Boulevard. Councilmember Loftus then asked if additional barrels could be placed at beach accesses with a consistently large volume of trash. Director Pitts indicated that the contractor informs him where additional barrels are needed.

Chair Buckhannon said that he would like to see the financial impact of deploying more barrels.

Director Pitts expressed the opinion that the sources for the overflowing barrels on Ocean Boulevard can be attributed to second home owners, not renters; the rental agencies employ a service to move the rollout carts into and out of the right-of-way.

D. Discussion of random acts of kindness

Chair Buckhannon stated that he has asked for this to be placed on the *AGENDA*, because he has been asked whether these random acts of kindness would apply to the pumping of private streets.

Administrator Tucker asked if he was talking about 48th Avenue, and he indicated that it was a possibility. Relative to that street, the Administrator said that she and Director Pitts do all that is possible to do – they have given the residents contact information about who they can employ to pump the street. They have tried to make it understood that life would be easier if the street were to be given to the City; under those circumstances, the City would be happy to pump. According to the Administrator, “there is a trail of legal correspondence . . . between their attorney and [the City’s] attorney about this street and the fact that it is a private street.”

In the past, when a family had rented a home of 48th and could not get in for the flooding, the City helped them get in. Director Pitts recalled assisting #2-48th when they could not get their car out due to the flooding.

The Chair acknowledged that there would be a cost to running the pumps for hours and the associated overtime.

Councilmember Ward said that he was unaware of this activity, and, from what he was hearing in the community, he wanted to see a written policy explaining how this is decided.

Administrator Tucker noted that there is no written policy; it is an initiative of the Public Works Department to provide a minimal cost or no-cost service to the citizens that has been in place since 2009.

Councilmember Ward indicated that he does not have a problem with the policy, but it would be safer if the City had a written policy. He stated that the policy does not have to be specific about what will or will not be picked up, but a general outline.

Chair Buckhannon asked whether the policy could be molded from the section of the Administrator's evaluation that deals with this subject.

Administrator Tucker responded that the only guidelines that exist for the Public Works Department are City ordinances, the requirements relative to safety and City-wide Personnel Manual. No Public Works policy manual exists for some type of guidelines to be inserted.

Councilmember Ward remarked that the City is going to be tested and made to look foolish.

Councilmember Loftus stated that he disagreed with Councilmember Ward; he said that the City has an exceptional team of department managers, who have, over the years, reached out when they see a need to help people. He voiced the opinion that a written policy would set the City up for more liability, for example when there are conflicting things going on at the same time on different ends of the island, people need help and the City does not have the resources. He said that the Committee needed to trust the department managers to know what they are doing; "things have been running well for years and years." Councilmember Loftus recalled sitting in City Hall for hours reading old minutes prior to his being elected and noted that this has never been an issue for the City, and it does not need to be an issue. He stated that he trusts Director Pitts to make the right decision. He reiterated that the City "has a system that has been in place and working, and there is no need to micro-manage the situation."

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Monday, May 6th in the City Hall Conference Room

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m.; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk