

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
Special Meeting

11:00 a.m., Monday, November 28, 2016

A Special Meeting of the Public Works Committee was called to order at 11:00 a.m., Monday, November 28, 2016 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Ferencz and Kinghorn, Chair Ward, City Administrator Tucker, Director Pitts, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. Mark Yodice was also present representing Thomas and Hutton.

1. Chair Ward 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. Discussion of bid received for NPDES compliance

Administrator Tucker reported that the City had received two (2) bid on this project and the lower of the two (2) was seven hundred fifty-six thousand dollars (\$756,000); included in the FY17 budget is approximately three hundred fourteen thousand dollars (\$314,000). Representatives of Thomas and Hutton met with people from Hitt Contracting, the low bidder, in hopes of finding ways to lower costs; the two (2) suggestions were to delay the construction of the white goods building and/or not to make the changes to the driveway and gate. Neither of these choices were acceptable to staff; delaying the white goods building would mean the City would remain non-compliant and eliminating the changes to the driveway and gate would mean that the vehicles would have a separate ingress and egress to drive through the wash-down facility.

Mr. Yodice said that the gate could be delayed, but the savings would be minor.

Councilmember Ferencz asked if the City knew exactly what parts of the project would be eligible for NPDES funds.

Director Kerr recalled that, two (2) years ago, Charleston County closely scrutinized every aspect of NPDES work, but they have backed off their strict adherence of the regulations. Where they looked at every piece of the project then, they now deem the entire project eligible since the only reason for the project is to become NPDES compliant. At Charleston County's suggestion, the City will take all but twenty percent (20%) of the funds accumulated.

Councilmember Ferencz asked that the City keep an open mind about the money being spent at the Public Works site; with a year-round population of less than four thousand (4,000) people, she questioned that anyone had looked at the efficiencies of the Isle of Palms having its own Public Works Department versus outsourcing the work. The Councilmember recognized that maintaining the same level of service would be difficult when outsourcing.

The Administrator stated that she had worked with both situations and cautioned that IOP residents love the level of service the City provides. She agreed that the City has made a large investment in the equipment needed to perform the public works functions, and she could see that the City would receive a lot of complaints if the level of service changed. The Administrator opined that the cost to outsource would be quite high because the City would be at the end of a route, resulting in a much longer drive to the landfill.

Councilmember Ferencz then asked at what point the City would decide to discontinue the Public Works Department.

Chair Ward said that this subject has become too emotional and was not being considered rationally; he voiced agreement with Councilmember Kinghorn that a cost analysis should be done. He remarked that the NPDES project was one hundred percent (100%) over budget and that he had been disappointed that City Council would not discuss moving the facility off the island.

Councilmember Ferencz stated that Council must look at alternatives and consider the level of service provided and the affordability in the future. She commented that the Public Works Department has a multi-million dollar budget every year.

Councilmember Kinghorn stated that, when he asks residents what department of the City serves them the best, they invariably answer the Public Works Department. He then reminded Chair Ward and Councilmember Ferencz that they were serving on City Council when this project was approved. Assuming the investment is made, he asked what the life cycle of the project would be.

Mr. Yodice replied that, typically NPDES regulations are reviewed every five (5) years; he said that he does not know what new regulations they may put in place then.

Administrator Tucker commented that the non-compliance issue has been discussed openly for several years, and, if the City were to be fined, the fine would be ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) a day.

If Council agrees to accept the low bid and proceed with the project, Councilmember Kinghorn wanted to know the amount of the funding gap.

According to the Administrator, the amount to be funded was two hundred forty-five thousand nine hundred seventy dollars (\$245,970).

Councilmember Kinghorn asked whether the gap could be met from other areas of the FY17 budget, and the Administrator responded that to do that was the goal. She stated that the City has started to receive reimbursements from the state for the twenty-five percent (25%) match required by FEMA for Joaquin; those matching funds were included in the FY17 budget, and that amount of money could be used toward the project.

The Chair commented that the Committee was not due to meet again until January 2017 and that the bid expires on December 31, 2016. He asked Mr. Yodice if he expected this hot market to continue into 2017, and Mr. Yodice indicated that he did.

3. Adjournment

MOTION: Having taken no action, Councilmember Kinghorn moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:36 a.m.; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.