

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m., February 1, 2017

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 1, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Kinghorn and Ward, Chair Ferencz, City Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts, and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. Assistant Administrator Fragoso was absent.

1. Chair Ferencz called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were 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 January 4, 2017 as submitted; Councilmember Kinghorn seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Ann Mahon of 7 Wills Way was before the Committee again about the overgrown lots at Wills Way and 31st Avenue; she reminded the Committee that she had asked for help in having them cleared in October 2016. She noted that these lots have become habitat for rats and coyotes that prey on neighborhood cats. According to Ms. Mahon, she has not received any communication from the City regarding the lots; she again referred to Section 6-1-33(c) that states

"In the event the responsible person fails to correct the conditions which violate this article within the time prescribed in the notice, the City Administrator may authorize agents or employees of the City to enter onto the property and take corrective action. The cost of corrective action taken by the City shall be a lien upon the property which shall be added to and collected in the same manner as the ad valorem taxes on the property."

Administrator Tucker told Mrs. Mahon that she had referred the matter to the Livability Officer, that she was certain that a letter was sent to the property owner, and she will follow up with the Police Department.

Mrs. Mahon added that, from her understanding of the ordinance, the City can clean the lot after some number of days after the letter is sent and can charge the property owner for the expense the City incurred to do so.

Concluding, Mrs. Mahon stated that the rental companies should be informing renters about the existence of coyotes on the island. And what they should do to protect their small animals.

4. Department Reports for January 2017 – Director Pitts

Vehicle Maintenance and Trash Collection Tracking Reports

For Director Pitts, the highlight of January was Public Works personnel clearing the debris left by the contractor hired to trim the palm trees on Palm Boulevard; this was a necessary concession made to stay within the budget of eighty-five hundred dollars (\$8,500). He told the Committee that he had gotten two (2) bids and that one (1) had been for fifty-five dollars (\$55) per tree and

that, by agreeing for the City to remove the debris, the cost was sixteen dollars and fifty cents (\$16.50) per tree. Personnel also mowed the rights-of-way between 21st and 41st Avenues and pumped water for a day and a half near the end of the month. Public Works was also called to assist the Police Department with the removal of a dolphin from the beach. For vehicle maintenance, two (2) sets of tires were purchased and comprised the bulk of the month's expenditures; the Director reported that half way through the fiscal year, he was confident of being under budget at the end of the year. Garbage collections for the month totaled one hundred eighty-three point six tons (183.6 T.), and debris removal totaled one hundred sixty-nine point fifteen tons (169.15 T.); both quantities were higher than the same period in the past two (2) years.

Referring to the Director's comment about meeting budget, the Administrator explained that he was referring to the operational budget for Public Works; she added that each department has items that are budgeted in tourism funds.

With budget processing looming, Chair Ferencz asked if there was a way to include all departmental expenses in a summary report that would include the items in funds other than the operating account.

According to the Administrator, many things on the island do not get done due to a lack of personnel; the Public Works Department has its hands full with the collection of garbage and debris and other miscellaneous tasks as time permits.

Director Pitts noted that in Public Works he manages to create time by having the temp labor perform peripheral tasks, for instance, cleaning and painting the beach trash barrels and cleaning beach access paths.

When Chair Ferencz asked for the monthly report to include the tasks, outside of garbage/debris collection, done by Public Works personnel as well as any task that was outsourced noting the contractor, Councilmember Ward voiced opposition to putting Director Pitts behind a desk for longer periods of time and adding tasks for him to perform.

Councilmember Kinghorn commented that a brief statement on the report would suffice.

Rather than reporting on the additional tasks Public Works personnel perform, the Administrator was more concerned about items in the City that need regular maintenance and servicing and are not getting it.

The Chair asked if the Director could report on the amount of garbage Mr. Schupp collects from the yellow carrels and recycle bins; the Director reported that Mr. Schupp has five (5) dumpsters that are emptied by Carolina Waste and are paid by Schupp Enterprises. Director Pitts said that he could only report on the number of trips Mr. Schupp makes to empty the beach barrels since that is the basis for being paid.

5. Old Business

A. Update on drainage on Sand Dollar Court

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that the expert advice they were given was for the City to take no action because, based on the evidence, the breaches occurred in the past and were all repaired and still hold. The City could install a drop inlet in the right-of-way at Mr. Klemm's property for about five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

When asked whether the Administrator had sent the engineering report to Mr. Klemm, the Administrator said that she has not received the revised letter to go to Mr. Klemm. She reported that she had communicated with Mr. Klemm, informing him that nothing was found that would have created his problem; therefore, no action by the City was needed.

Administrator Tucker noted that there are other places on the island where water stands for days after a heavy rainfall.

B. Update on NPDES Project

The Administrator reported that the Notice to Proceed has been issued to the contractor and that a plan for the metal building has been sent to the manufacturer who has accepted it.

C. Update on Phase II Drainage

The City hopes to be in construction in May; the delay has been due to the tourist impact on the golf course where the outfall will be located.

D. Update on Flapper Valve for Tabby Lane

Administrator Tucker reported that she has yet to receive the proposal from Dave Stevens.

E. Timeline and Parameters for Public Works Cost Analysis

Chair Ferencz stated that a cost analysis was brought up at the last meeting by Councilmember Kinghorn to include everything Public Works does.

Councilmember Ward asked if the goal was to learn the cost to provide services to the residents of the island versus the cost of outsourcing. He continued that to outsource garbage collection would be very unpopular with residents; when no problems exist with garbage collection by the City, he questioned why anyone would consider a change.

The Administrator stated that she has worked in communities that have done both, and, with outsourcing, the residents lose the personal touch that they get today. If a resident needs a special pickup, a call to Public Works is all it takes to get it; that would not happen if the service were outsourced – the level of service delivery would be reduced with outsourcing. She reported that Sullivan's Island outsources its garbage collection but continue to try to give concierge service, and the residents pay more than IOP residents.

Since everyone is satisfied with the status quo, Councilmember Kinghorn suggested that the City task the Council of Governments (COG) or the Municipal Association to review their data for the costs to outsource versus the costs to stay in-house.

Chair Ferencz was of the opinion that people will pay top dollar for the value they are getting, but, she thought at some point in the future, “the bubble would burst” and the City would be forced to outsource.

Councilmember Kinghorn stated that the information the City gets from the COG or MASC might show the City is getting a deal and not overpaying for services.

6. New Business

A. Consideration of Public Works’ major request(s) for FY18 budget

Director Pitts said that he had not yet met with the Treasurer to discuss the Department’s needs, but he commented that he was aware of two (2) vehicles on the schedule to be replaced that he wanted to defer another year.

Administrator Tucker noted that, based on discussions in the Visioning Meeting, the City will expand the scope of the landscaping contract; therefore, that line item will have to be increased. She noted that the job of overseeing that contract will likely fall to Director Pitts.

B. Discussion of major challenges for the Public Works Department for the remainder of FY17

Of primary concern to Director Pitts was trying to maintain compliance with the regulations for the underground storage tanks (UST); he indicated that it was a very time consuming part of his job despite the assistance he receives from the Fire Department at the Public Safety Building. He explained that failing an inspection would mean that the City would be denied gasoline.

To Councilmember Kinghorn, maintaining UST compliance was an administrative job.

Director Pitts stated that he was a “hands-on type of guy,” and he has a dedicated, long time employee who is responsible for managing the guys in Public Works.

Councilmember Kinghorn opined that other things in the City’s realm must meet compliance regulations and asked if the City had ever considered hiring a compliance officer or hiring one of the agencies available to provide that service.

Councilmember Ward stated that the City cannot afford to hire personnel or new service now, but Director Pitts cannot be expected to do everything.

Two (2) other challenges to the Director were managing the stormwater contract to keep the water flowing and properly maintaining the Department’s fleet and staying within budget.

7. Miscellaneous Business – None

Next Meeting Date: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 1, 2017 in the Conference Room.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m.; Councilmember Kinghorn seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk