

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m., Friday, June 9, 2017

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 11:00 a.m., Friday, June 9, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Kinghorn and Ward, Chair Ferencz, Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

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 Kinghorn moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 3, 2017 as submitted; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Ann Mahon, 7 Wills Way, attended the meeting to get an update on the overgrown lot at the corner of Wills Way and 30th Avenue; she opined that, if the owner was not going to be responsible to clear the lot, the City should place a lien on the property until such time as it is cleared.

Assistant Fragoso stated that, according to Chief Buckhannon, the owner has been located, and the lot was part of a divorce settlement; the responsible party is in the process of hiring someone to do the work.

Ms. Mahon stated that she has been told that the City no longer sends letters to property owners about overgrown properties, but Administrator Tucker assured her that the City sends the letters on an annual basis.

Ms. Mahon expressed concern over the fact that these lots become the habitat to rats and coyotes, but, once they are cleared, the creatures leave.

Chair Ferencz suggested establishing a mechanism to communicate to all residents the City's effort to beautify the island; the message could be on the water bills, on the website and on the City's Facebook and Twitter feeds. The Chair considered a media plan with a new theme every month and inquired about the possibility of putting a couple of trash bins on Waterway Boulevard.

Director Pitts stated that trash bins on Waterway would not solve the litter problem; he reported that the City had put several trash barrels on the non-ocean side of Palm between 21st and 41st Avenues and that they had not generated enough garbage to warrant the extra time to empty them.

Bret Jones from The Dinghy addressed the Committee about relocating the trash dumpster; he reported that the fence around it is falling down and, in his opinion, should be replaced with concrete walls. He brought two (2) aerial photos of the area showing the proposed location for the dumpster which could potentially add sixteen (16) parking spaces on the sides of the restaurant. He also offered to lease the space from the City if the dumpster was moved.

Director Pitts commented that the fencing was damaged during Hurricane Matthew and has not yet been repaired; on the subject of relocating the dumpster, he said the major issue was maintaining access to the dumpster by the trucks belonging to Carolina Waste and Charleston County.

Mr. Jones added that he would also prefer to move the recycling bins from their current location.

Councilmember Ward noted that increasing the number of parking spaces would also mean increasing City revenues.

Director Pitts was asked to make a site visit and to come back to the Committee with his recommendations.

The Administrator added that the other users of the dumpster should be contacted to ensure that relocating the dumpster would not create an unforeseen problem for them.

(The pictures Mr. Jones put before the Committee are attached to the historical record of the meeting.)

4. Department Reports for May 2017 – Director Pitts

With the start of the beach season, personnel cleaned the debris from the beach six (6) times; in addition, the Director reported that he had mowed and cleared the multi-use path on Waterway Boulevard from 23rd to 31st Avenues of the overgrowth. The multi-use path from 30th to 41st Avenues are part of the golf course; in his opinion, his work reclaimed about ninety percent (90%) of the path. Although he has advised the Committee that he expected to end the year under budget in Vehicle Maintenance expense, the Caterpillar has broken down, and he expects the repair to be very expensive. In May, garbage was approximately thirty tons (30 T.) more than the same month in 2016, and debris collections were down almost fifty tons (50 T.).

Referring again to the multi-use path on Waterway Boulevard, Chair Ferencz asked the Director if he had any information about who might have cut the hole in the hedge and taken the sign from 25th and Waterway.

The Director replied that he only knew that Public Works had not cut the hedge or removed the sign.

The Chair also commended Director Pitts for the work on the multi-use path; she expressed a hope that, once the path is completely clear, the residents might volunteer to maintain it. She also reported that she has heard much positive feedback from residents about how well it looks.

5. Old Business

A. Update on NPDES Project – Consideration of Hitt Construction Change Order

Director Kerr introduced Mark Yodice, the construction supervisor for the project from Thomas and Hutton, to the Committee and explained that Mr. Yodice was negotiating with Hitt.

When the work began, Hitt workers uncovered significantly more underground debris than they had expected; the change order is for the unanticipated expense for the removal of the asphalt underneath the gravel driveway and extra soil to fill the space. Mr. Yodice disagrees with the volume of debris removed; therefore, he would not recommend that the City pay the change order as submitted in the amount of fifteen thousand three hundred fifty-two dollars (\$15,352). Mr. Yodice explained that a quantity of the asphalt that was obvious to the naked eye and should have been included in the original bid and not included in the change order. Although Hitt provided copies of the load tickets, Mr. Yodice is not satisfied with the data that has been provided, because he does not know the volume of the "obvious" material was removed. On the financial worksheet for the project, the ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) figure shown was an estimate of the change order; the Administrator is hopeful that a figure can be agreed upon for the Ways and Means Committee meeting on June 20th.

The Administrator foreshadowed that the project will require special inspections per the City's building code.

B. Consideration of amendment to Civil Site Environmental (CSE) contract for engineering on the Phase II Drainage Project

Administrator Tucker reported that the project is currently out for bid, and the bid opening has been scheduled for July 10th. The contract with CSE has been in place since 2014 and before the City received the Rural Infrastructure Grant; the engineering fees for the project are grant eligible.

The amendment is in the amount of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) and is included in the FY18 budget.

MOTION: Councilmember Kinghorn moved to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee an amendment to the Civil Site Environmental contract to include the items listed on the proposed amendment and the addition of \$30,000; Councilmember Ward seconded.

When asked whether this fee was included in the FY18 budget, Administrator Tucker stated that it was included in an aggregate number in the Capital Projects fund assigned to the drainage project.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Update on drainage issues

- 1. Sand Dollar Drive** – Charleston County has completed the work to resolve the drainage issue and to rebuild the resident's driveway.
- 2. Intracoastal Court and Waterway Boulevard** – Director Pitts will check with Charleston County about the timing of the work needed here.

D. Discussion of possible CDL driver shortage

Assistant Fragoso reported that the possibility of a shortage of CDL drivers in three to five (3-5) years was part of a discussion by an insurance carrier; he indicated that, statistically, young people are not going into the public sector, especially public works.

Such information supports the need for a continuity plan for the Department.

Director Pitts noted that the quality of the temp labor he needs is hard to come by due to the amount of construction in the tri-county area.

Responding to the chair's question about automation, the Director stated that Charleston County would likely give away the "one armed bandits", trucks that are automated to pick up the barrels, empty them and return them to the ground, they are using for recycling. They drop material on the ground, and frequently garbage barrels end up left on the roadside turned over or upside down.

When Councilmember Ward asked how the wages in the Public Works Department compared with other local governments, Director Pitts replied that he has not made any inquiries recently.

And the Director stated that the two (2) full-time, temporary personnel were doing very well; one (1) would like to become fulltime and permanent if a position becomes available. The other temporary employee is Chief Buckhannon's son; he is working on a masters degree in another field and not interested in a permanent position.

Administrator Tucker suggested that there was merit in asking the Personnel Committee to research the demand in CDL drivers, and she commented that the City competes with long-haul truckers for CDL drivers.

E. Discussion of timetable for Waterway Boulevard multi-use path clearing

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of citizen request to pipe ditch on 32nd Avenue

Jim Burke has approached the City again to pipe the ditch on 32nd Avenue; he is proposing that he and his neighbor would split the cost. Director Pitts stated that to pipe the ditch is more involved than one of a landscaper digging a ditch, placing the pipe and covering it up; by going through Public Works, he must hire an engineer to devise the plans that would then have to be approved by the County's engineer.

Last week the City got eight and a half inches (8½ in.) of rain in a couple of days; if the ditch had been piped, Mr. Burke would have had water in and under his house. On a barrier island, the best drainage is achieved with open ditches.

Councilmember Ward suggested inviting Mr. Burke to attend the July meeting so that the reasons for an open ditch can be explained to him, but Mr. Burke told the Director that he was going to be in Florida for June and July. The Committee agreed to take no action, but to inform Mr. Burke that the Committee was willing to talk with him.

B. Status of the dumpster at The Dinghy

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

C. Report on damaged hedge at 25th Avenue and Waterway Boulevard

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

D. Discussion of 3 major challenges in the tourist season

Director Pitts stated that the first challenge was keeping the beach clean; personnel take a truck load of broken chairs, tents, etc. to Charleston Steel three to five (3-5) times a week. The second challenge is “manufacturing” time to allow for debris pickup without having to work on Saturdays although the Public Works’ personnel are willing to work anytime the need arises. The issue of time is particularly tight when the crews are picking up garbage twice a week; twice a week garbage runs from the week after Memorial Day week to the week before Labor Day for a total of twelve (12) weeks. The third challenge for the Director is following the regulations and maintaining the records for the six (6) underground storage tanks (UST); the marina has four (4) USTs and two (2) are at Public Works.

Compliance regulations for the underground storage tanks (UST) require a passing test on each tank once a month; a failing test means that no fuel can be delivered to the City until there is a passing test on that tank. The test takes about four hours (4 hrs.) and is performed in the middle of the night, and it typically takes an entire month to get a passing test on all six (6) tanks. Director Pitts estimated that he spends forty to fifty hours (40 – 50 hrs.) a month dedicated to the USTs.

The Director continued stating that the owner must be the tester and that he is the only Class A operator working for the City. When the time comes to hire a new Assistant Director, one (1) requirement will be that the person is or will become a Class A operator. In addition, he informed the Committee that a Class A operator must be on site at all times when the tanks are operational. Director Pitts also would want an assistant who was a CDL driver to fill in when needed; he would be looking for a working supervisor.

E. Discussion of need for administrative position for Public Works

Director Pitts stated that he had a part-time secretary until 2004; since then, the Director’s clerical needs have been met by anyone in City Hall who has a free moment. Since the Director spends the majority of every day in the field, he needs someone who will answer phones, generate purchase orders in accordance with the new Procurement Code, maintain records and the safety manual, etc.

Administrator Tucker stated that staff had suggested that a viable solution would be to turn the seasonal position in General Government to a full-time position and to add the Public Works' duties. At present, the list of tasks included in the meeting packet are being done by the Director or by whoever in City Hall has the time to assist him; in general, Public Works duties would consume fifteen to twenty (15-20) hours per week.

Councilmember Kinghorn noted that the person who would do these tasks would not have the skill set to also be a Class A operator.

Administrator Tucker stated that currently consideration is being given to training the Animal Control Officer to be the Director's backup as a Class A operator.

Director Pitts informed the Committee that this clerical position was being forecasted for the FY9 budget year.

Based on the Director's comments, the Chair commented that she thought the Director actually needed two (2) people; she asked that he organize what he does and determine the type of employee needed to do them.

Director Pitts repeated that the day-to-day operations of the Department would continue normally, but no one has been trained to perform his own responsibilities.

The Administrator said that Director Pitts needs an Assistant Director who could step into the Director's shoes when he was away and who would be a working supervisor.

As has been stated before, all of the personnel in the Public Works Department have been with the City for many years; therefore, Chair Ferencz asked the Director to begin to think about his staffing needs for the next five to ten (5-10) years. In addition, she opined that, if the clerical assistance for Public Works was going to be located in City Hall, the job description must be clearly delineated.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Trash on 41st Avenue – add fine for littering to parking signs

Assistant Frago reported that she has talked to Captain Usry who agreed to contact SCDOT for permission to add signage warning against littering and announcing the fines attached to it.

Administrator Tucker agreed that signage would not solve the problem because she was of the opinion that much of the debris along 41st Avenue has blown out of boats as they are transported to and from the marina. Currently, employees of Marina Joint Ventures pick up debris from the marina site and down the ingress/egress to 41st Avenue. The Committee discussed the possibility of initiating a campaign to encourage residents to pick up garbage anywhere they see it.

The Director reported that the general trash left on the beach fill two (2) truckloads per week.

When the Chair asked about parking on 41st Avenue, the Administrator said that it had been much better the previous weekend than it was over the Memorial Day weekend.

Next meeting date: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 2, 2017 in the Conference Room.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:43 p.m.; Councilmember Kinghorn seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk