

Recreation Committee
5:00 p.m., Monday, April 7, 2014

The regular meeting of the Recreation Committee was held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2014 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Buckhannon and Harrington, Chair Carroll, City Administrator Tucker, Recreation Director Page, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business,

1. Chair Carroll 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 Harrington moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 3, 2014 as submitted; Chair Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments** – None

4. Departmental Report for March 2014 – Director Page

Adult softball started its season, and the players love the new lights and fencing. Other athletics that started in March for adults are 3 on 3 basketball, 6 vs 6 soccer, and table tennis. The 16th Annual Half Rubber Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, August 16th. The first youth (9 to 12 years old) baseball game was scheduled for this evening, and Director Page hoped that the game could be completed before the rain settled in for the night. Baseball games for five to eight (5-8) year olds will begin on April 12th. The Director explained that Fast Start Baseball was for three and four (3-4) year olds with activities on Saturday mornings starting in March. Spike Nights is a volleyball clinic attended primarily by girls; it began as a program for girls who do not make the school teams and provides an opportunity for them to hone their skills. The IOP Beach Run is scheduled for Saturday, June 19th; applications and flyers were available in the CVB booth on Saturday, April 5th for runners participating in the Cooper River Bridge Run. Many classes, such as ballet and gymnastics, will end in May and will resume in September.

Director Page reported to the Committee that there is a bill before the Legislature that could impact the Jump Start and Tiny Tots programs at the gym; the bill would establish regulations for programs that are over an hour but less than four (4) hours and are continuous, making these programs meet school standards. There are lobbyists working for the Recreation Departments over the state to defeat the bill; a vote is anticipated on Wednesday at 8:30 a.m.

The most recent school dance was held on March 31st and was attended by three hundred forty-four (344) students. The last middle school dance of the 2013-2014 school year will be held on Friday, May 30th.

The Charleston County School District has named March 28th as a make-up day, so School's Out Activities for that day have been cancelled, but the Recreation Department will have a full week of activities for spring break, April 14th – 18th.

The *tae kwon do* classes that have been in-place for years continue to be well-attended; the same cannot be said of the two (2) new classes, i.e. Family Participation and Senior Participation. The staff has decided to give the programs more time to catch-on.

The 2014 *Tae Kwon Do* Tournament was held on Saturday, March 15th; seventy-one (71) participants came from Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and California, as well as South Carolina.

The tennis programs for children are very successful. The program by the Writing from Memory class will be held on Friday, April 11th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. The yoga classes continue to do well also.

Proceeding to special events planned for the island, Island Gras was held on Saturday, March 1, and, despite less than favorable weather, an even larger event is planned for next year. Due to the prediction of extreme weather, the annual Yard Sale has been re-scheduled to Saturday, April 26th; fifty (50) spaces have been reserved. The annual Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 19th and will begin at exactly 10:00 a.m.; Keen-agers stuffed Easter candy bags at their April meeting. Replacing "Piccolo Spoleto Goes to the Beach" is "Music in the Park" planned for Saturday, May 3rd on the grounds of the Recreation Center; this event will be family-friendly with bluegrass music. The Piccolo Spoleto Sand Sculpting Contest will be held on Saturday, June 7th at 9:00 a.m. All sessions of Camp Summershine have been filled for this summer. Classes offered by the Rec Center that are open to employees through the Employee Wellness program as Total Body Challenge, Semi-Personal Training and BOSU. Beginning May 1, a boot camp will be added to the list; classes will be on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:00 a.m. The fitness program at the Public Safety Building continues to be successful, averaging six (6) employees per session. A Wellness corn hole competition is scheduled for April 23rd with a location to be determined.

Chair Carroll asked for more information on the outfield for the baseball field; Director Page noted that the field is sand and grows weeds. It is has holes and bumps from settling as well.

5. Old Business

Review of FY15 Operating and Capital Budgets and Budgetary Tools

Administrator Tucker noted that there are new tools in the meeting packets, and she wanted to begin the review with them since the budget document was reviewed extensively at the March Ways and Means Committee meeting. The first document to be reviewed was the Recreation Budget Worksheet that compares FY14 to FY15 and which funds were supporting which services; when the Committee saw the budget the last time, the debt service was not included. This document includes the debt service and its impact on the percentages of expenditures being paid by the various funds; the box at the bottom of the page shows the percentages the same for FY14 and FY15. The Administrator explained that staff is seeking feedback from the policy-setting body concerning whether they would like to see changes – more allocated to tourism funds or less allocated to tourism funds.

Councilmember Harrington repeated his question about why no Recreation Department activities are allocated to the Hospitality Fund; the Administrator stated that funds could be allocated to the Hospitality Fund if it were the will of Council. Historically no personnel expenses have been assigned to tourism funds in the Recreation Department.

One (1) of the newly created tools is a delineation of the number of full-time positions in each department, what the City has historically funded by tourism, as well as part-time positions. In addition, the schedule provides information of the number of positions that could be tourism-related based on information provided by each department and the number of positions funded by tourism funds in the FY14 budget. This tool is used to determine whether Council wants to fund more or fewer or the same number of positions in the FY15 budget.

According to the Administrator, the goal of these tools would be for Council to determine whether the decisions made in the past, relative to which positions to fund from tourism dollars, should be continued or whether Council wants to see fewer or more positions funded from tourism funds.

Councilmember Buckhannon quoted from the schedule that thirty percent (30%) of the full-time positions in the Police, Fire and Public Works Department, in total, could be funded from tourism funds; Administrator Tucker confirmed that he was interpreting the schedule correctly.

Assistant Dziuban made the argument that the percentage could be higher, noting, for example, that General Government has no positions funded by tourism funds, but personnel spend their days giving out t-shirts, giving directions, answering questions and responding to emails from visitors, but there is no way to quantify a percentage.

A second tool, prepared at the request of Chair Carroll, is the estimated source of the City revenue divided between into the following categories: accommodation rentals, second homes, day visitors, marina and all other City revenues. The computations relative to the percentages assigned to the revenues are on second page; the schedule uses the year-end audited numbers from FY13. The bottom line of the schedule notes the percent of total revenue attributable to each revenue source that is:

Accommodations rentals	47%
Second homes	17%
Day visitors	8%
All other City Revenues	25%
Marina	4%

Chair Carroll pointed out that residents are subsidized by visitors and non-owners coming to the island.

Administrator Tucker stated that she is hopeful that these two (2) new tools will be helpful as either reassurances about how decisions were made in the past or the basis for different decisions going forward.

Chair Carroll indicated that the non-residents' use of the many programs at the Recreation Center could be validation for assigning a position to tourism funds.

Administrator Tucker reiterated from the March Ways and Means meeting that the Committees were asked to sink their teeth into the budget materials to close the gap of one million one hundred sixty-two thousand dollars (\$1,162,000). The gap can only be filled by cutting expenditures or identifying additional sources of revenue or reallocating expenditures in some way. The schedule entitled "Isle of Palms Fund Balance Roll-forward for FY15 Budget" is designed to give the Committees a menu of options available to close the gap. In an effort to navigate through the information, the Administrator directed attention to "Repeat FY14 Transfers In for Personnel and Operating Expenses" and stated that, if the Committee believed, as in years past, that those transfers-in to cover the expenditures were reasonable and would concur with their being repeated similarly, then that would capture six hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$620,000). If the Committee were to agree, in addition, to fund the three (3) new firefighters hired in FY14, one (1) additional existing firefighter and one (1) additional existing patrol officer with transfers in from tourism funds for a total of approximately two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$275,000), the combined total is approximately eight hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$895,000) toward closing the gap of one million one hundred sixty-two thousand dollars (\$1,162,000).

Councilmember Buckhannon referred to the schedule of positions by department funded by tourism dollars and noted that schedule indicates that the tourism funds should be funding seventeen (17) firefighters while only seven (7) are proposed.

The Administrator cautioned that the tourism funds have to be able to afford the transfers; the tourism funds are not an unlimited well of money. The City has to ensure that each year the fund is replenished with more revenue coming in. Chair Carroll added that, should the island experience a major storm event, the tourism funds would stop for years afterwards, but the employees' jobs do not stop.

Administrator Tucker moved down the "roll-forward" schedule to "Increases in General Fund Revenues" to aid in closing the gap; she suggested that members should prioritize the recommendations listed. The City needs to increase revenues in order to avoid exhausting any fund balances; as expenses continue to increase year after year, the City needs to look to increase revenues as well. The Administrator recommended that the City should capture the one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) that the City is paid ahead for insurance; the City has operated for some period of time paid ahead by half a year for some. The City could make this one (1) time accounting correction and reduce the remaining gap by half. Since this is a one-time adjustment, revenues need to be increased to reduce future gaps between revenues and expenditures.

The Administrator directed attention to the first item, "Increase FY15 Property Tax Budget to FY13 Actual Based on Healthy FY14 year-to-date;" she reported that the City has received a final collection on one (1) of its property tax revenues and the numbers did not come in as favorably as hoped; therefore, that option is no longer do-able.

Administrator Tucker reiterated that the City needs to find ways to increase revenues to maintain healthy fund balances as the City has been able to do for many years.

There have been increases in expenses that are beyond the City's control, and the City has taken no action on the revenue side to offset them. The Administrator reminded the Committee that the City, for two (2) years, received insurance benefits from its previous carrier that helped to absorb some of those increases in expenses.

Responding to Councilmember Harrington's question, Administrator Tucker stated that the City has not increased taxes for quite a while; she remembers that, when the City hired nine (9) fire-fighters, taxes were increased, and they were increased again by referendum to build the Rec Center expansion. Additionally, the City has not taken the allowable CPI index increase in property taxes each year, which most local governments do. If the City were to increase the operating millage for the previous four (4) years, revenues would increase by two hundred forty-five thousand dollars (\$245,000); such an action would increase the taxes on a seven hundred fifty thousand dollar (\$750,000) house by thirty-six dollars (\$36.00) per year. This action is staff's second recommendation for increasing revenues.

Staff's third recommendation for increasing revenue is to raise the per hour fee on the parking kiosks to one dollar and fifty cents (\$1.50) from one dollar (\$1.00) which captures fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000).

Councilmember Harrington asked whether the City had done a comparison of parking fees with other beachside communities; the Administrator said it has not been done recently. Director Page reported that Surfside Beach has increased its parking fee to one dollar fifty cents (\$1.50). The Administrator said that some members of Council were concerned that an increase would be a problem for Front Beach businesses and some were worried that an increase would drive more visitors into the neighborhoods to park. Since the meters now take credit/debit cards, Administrator Tucker speculated that an increase would not have any impact.

Repeating the statement that the City has not had a tax increase in many years, Councilmember Harrington voiced the opinion that staff should have the year of the last increase for the Ways and Means Committee; he stated that, as the residents want more and better services, they should be prepared to pay more to support them. Articles in recent newspapers indicate that some local governments are not only taking the CPI tax increase, but are also tax increases beyond that.

The expenditures for consideration under the heading "Reduce or Defer Expenses" with associated dollar amounts are:

Reduce per gallon fuel estimate from \$4.25 to \$4.00	\$ 10,564
Adjust merit pool by 1%	24,601
Reduce Fire Department Part-time	30,000
Reduce 4B tipping fees	2,500
Capture benefit of 1 time accounting correction	150,855
Move new account software to FY16	175,000
Move re-paving of Ocean Blvd. to FY16	112,500

Move Recreation ball field renovation to FY16	100,000
Move City Council AV upgrade to FY16	40,000

Councilmember Buckhannon asked Director Page about the balance remaining in the ball field lighting project; Director Page noted that the ball field fencing has also been paid from this budget, and the remaining balance was transferred to the Capital Projects fund.

Administrator Tucker explained that she understood that the Ways and Means Committee wanted each Committee to have recommendations for deferrals or reductions in expenditures or selections from the menu for transfers in or increases to revenue to help close the budgetary gap for the April meeting.

Chair Carroll questioned the importance of the built-in bleachers for the gymnasium, and Director Page stated that she was willing to remove this item of the budget because she is concerned, after talking with the vendor, that these bleachers will cause the floor to buckle.

The Director told the Committee that she was “passionate” about the security system because there are areas of the property that are not covered as well as they should be for the safety of the children and the system needs to be upgraded to digital. The existing system was installed in 2005.

Chair Carroll asked whether the rehabilitation of ball fields could be deferred another year, and the Director stated that it could.

Councilmember Buckhannon asked what would be involved in rehabilitating the fields; Director Page responded that it would be removing what is there now, bringing soil in, leveling and crowning or laser grading them, fertilizing sodding and irrigating. The quote she obtained in 2012 was ninety-two thousand eight hundred dollars (\$92,800). Councilmember Buckhannon also asked whether the irrigation system would be hooked up to a well or use City water; the Director said that it would use City water.

Assuming this project remained in the budget, Councilmember Buckhannon asked what the timing of it would be; the Director stated that skinning and preparation could begin in the winter, but the balance of the work would be in the spring. Further questioning related to spring sports and the possibility delaying them if the work went into spring. Director Page said she would need to talk to the vendor to give an answer.

Chair Carroll inquired why well water would not be used. The Director said that they could use well water; that is what is used on the soccer fields.

Chair Carroll noted that, unlike the fencing, the ball fields are not a safety issue, but Director Page agreed that, for the children, safety was not an issue, but the same cannot be said for adults because the outfield and softball field are quite dangerous.

Administrator Tucker recommended leaving this item in the budget at this stage of the process giving the Director time to talk with the vendor to get answers to some of the questions posed at

this meeting. The Administrator also encouraged the Committee to discuss the options for increasing revenues to provide feedback to the Ways and Means Committee.

As the discussion moved to the Recreation Operating budget, Director Page indicated that the lobby furniture and folding chairs were not critical for FY15 and could be deferred until FY16.

Chair Carroll questioned the fuel costs being estimated at four dollars and a quarter (\$4.25); Administrator Tucker explained that the cost estimate gives a cushion should there be a spike in fuel prices. Councilmember Harrington noted that diesel fuel is more expensive than gasoline and the City has several vehicles that require diesel.

Regarding the re-surfacing of the tennis courts, Director Page stated that the cost could be reduced by four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

Administrator Tucker stated that she would like to get the Committee's opinions regarding the assignment of employees to the tourism funds and increases in revenues.

Chair Carroll stated that he was opposed to a tax increase.

Councilmember Buckhannon stated that he has no issue with the transfers in for personnel and indicated that, possibly, the number of personnel, from the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments should be increased based on the information presented earlier in the meeting. He was interested in knowing the fund balance of the tourism funds to know how many more could be added. In addition he was satisfied with the suggested projects to be deferred to FY16. He commented that he would like to see every Committee go through its operating budget(s) for deferrals or reductions before making decisions to increase revenues.

Relative to increasing the kiosk per-hour rate, Councilmember Buckhannon remarked that he does not want that to be the catalyst for driving more visitors to parking in the neighborhoods to avoid paying.

Councilmember Harrington repeated his opinion that, if the residents want more or better services, they should be willing to pay additional taxes to have them. He stated that he also supported increasing business license fees for off-island businesses as well as increasing franchise fees.

Chair Carroll voiced the opinion that, if all Committees were to go through the operating budget(s) for deferrals or reductions, there will be no need to increase taxes.

6. New Business

Consideration of the City's Use of Facebook

Chair Carroll stated that he had requested that this topic be added to the *Agenda* for the Committee's consideration; he reported that he has been looking at the websites for other local municipalities and noted that many of them do use Facebook. The Chair thought that Facebook

might be a good means to get information about Rec events and other City activities to residents and visitors.

Director Page stated that she thought it would be very time consuming for a person to maintain it and be involved in it all day to respond to or delete comments. Councilmember Buckhannon commented that the settings can be changed to eliminate in-coming communications.

The Director agreed that Facebook is a good tool for marketing and that it reaches a much broader group than the City's website will, as well as a section of the populace that the website would possibly never reach. She reported that the Recreation Department's RecTrac program can broadcast to a large group, such as all who are playing baseball, to inform them that a game has been cancelled.

Chair Carroll agreed with Councilmember Buckhannon that the information coming through Facebook is immediate, what is going on today.

According to Councilmember Harrington, the Exchange Club is on Facebook, it was heavily used for the Connector Run.

The Municipal Association has distributed guidance on social media, and Assistant Dziuban has attended several of these seminars, the Administrator asked that she share some of the knowledge she has gained. Assistant Dziuban stated that MASC suggests that local governments start small and start slowly and that the municipality should be intentional in establishing its goals, meaning that one should not enter into social media as an experiment, but to do so with a specific purpose or plan for its implementation. The City would also need to establish a policy for the use of social media. With the sonic walls installed by Chief Buckhannon on City computers, employees cannot access any social media sites.

Another area that focused upon is what MASC refers to as "closing the loops for social media." Currently the City has four (4) primary outlets for pushing information out to the public; they are the e-newsletter, the website, the Intranet and the City's YouTube channel, but there is an infinite number of choices from which the City can choose.

For Assistant Dziuban, the decision-making is energy investment versus the number of ways that the City chooses to disseminate information, for instance, after Facebook, to pick-up Twitter and then an Instagram account. In the Assistant's opinion, the City would need to decide how much of a time-investment it wants to put into picking up new ways to push information out versus other things it wants to accomplish.

Assistant Dziuban commented that the City's website is not very dynamic; it is fairly static, serving as a repository of information, but she still spends an exceptional amount of time to keep it updated and maintained. Director Page stated that her staff updates scores and standings in sports leagues every day.

If the City were to decide to be on Facebook, Assistant Dziuban strongly recommended that viewers not be allowed to comment because the City would need a person to read those

comments, to remove those that are inappropriate and to respond to comments that are challenges. By allowing comments, the expectation is that the City will engage the commentary.

Without comments, Facebook would begin to mirror the City's website by pushing out the same information.

Chair Carroll stated that he sees Facebook as being a friendlier version to get information out than the City's website. He added that he thought the Intranet could be much better in its communication between departments. He noted that he was proposing a one directional feed of information about team sports and up-coming events, and he suggested that the members of the Committee put "feelers" out in the community to gauge how it would be received.

Councilmember Buckhannon indicated that the only way the City should use Facebook is to be one-directional as another information outlet.

Administrator Tucker remarked that, if the City were to allow comments, the City would need to have someone monitoring the site twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. The Administrator added that people expect the learning curve to be short and the expediency of responses to be quick; therefore, the need for constant monitoring.

Director Page reported that there is a huge population who regularly come to the Rec Center who do not use Facebook; she stated that the seniors use Facebook, and the young have moved on to another platform.

Before presenting this idea to the full Council, the Administrator stated that the City would need to make a policy decision and to adopt a social media policy that would become part of the employee handbook. Administrator Tucker commented that the issue to be discussed is whether each individual department would have a Facebook page with an overall City page or there would be an all-encompassing page that would feed information from each City department. The Administrator said that she did not know how many more tasks the staff of City Hall can add and still get done what has to be done.

Chair Carroll suggested the issue needed further investigation.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, May 5 in the Conference Room.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.; Councilmember Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:
Marie Copeland
City Clerk