

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

Isle of Palms, South Carolina

January 16, 2007

A regular meeting of the Ways & Means Committee was held at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard. Present were Chairman Taylor, Committee members Mayor Sottile, Council members Bettelli, Buckhannon, Cronin, Hanbury, McMackin, Marino and Rice, City Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts, Recreation Director Page, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Treasurer Suggs and City Clerk Darrow.

1. **Call to Order.** Councilman Taylor called the meeting to order and stated that members of the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with State Law. He noted that all Committee members were present.

2. **Election of Chair**

MOTION: Councilman Marino nominated Councilman Taylor as Chair; seconded by Councilman Cronin; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

3. **Approval of Previous Month's Minutes.**

MOTION: Councilwoman Hanbury made a motion to approve the November 21, 2006 as presented; seconded by Councilman Marino; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Councilwoman Hanbury made a special commendation to City Clerk Darrow for her efforts with last month's minutes.

4. **Citizens' Comments.**

Jeff Jacobs, 606 Ocean Boulevard. Mr. Jacobs noted that the list serve he has been handling this year has been successful and submitted that this service was highly desired by many citizens. He endorsed the hiring of a new employee for General Government to handle the list serve and other website matters for the City. While the job description for the position has altered to encompass other duties than website management (grants, RFP, etc), which has raised the salary range for the employee, he encouraged Council to hire the additional person.

On another matter, Chairman Taylor noted Ms. Bernhardt with Arcadia Publishing is present for the application from the South Carolina Film Guide advertisement, Item 7A on tonight's agenda. He asked for the Committee to move this matter forward for consideration now to accommodate Ms. Bernhardt's schedule conflicts. **There was general Committee consensus for this request.**

7. **New Business**

A. Recommendation from Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee for \$1,044 for advertisement in the 2007 South Carolina Film Commission Production Guide.

Ms. Bernhardt reviewed the application before the Committee, highlighting the national exposure of the publication in the movie industry and media outlets.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the recommendation for \$1,044 from Accommodations Tax Funds for advertisement in the 2007 South Carolina Film Commission Production Guide; seconded by Councilman Bettelli.

Discussion:

Councilwoman McMackin expressed concern with the application, as filming would be a business not allowed on the beach. She further submitted that the City does not need to advertise the attractions of the beach area nation-wide.

Councilwoman Rice also expressed concern with the fact that businesses are not allowed on the beach and the fee for filming on the island is not a big revenue source. She noted that the fee is relatively low, at \$100 or \$150 per day. She suggested the City needed to concentrate on attracting vacationers, not film groups.

Councilman Bettelli noted that filming crews would bring in revenue by patronizing the restaurants and accommodations available on the island.

Councilwoman Hanbury clarified that the City had not had any filming on the island in the past three (3) years since the City first ran an ad in this publication. Ms. Bernhardt suggested that the publication would provide exposure to the island for not only filming, but also ancillary revenue realized from filming crews even if they filmed in Mount Pleasant or Charleston. She noted that film crews, when on-location in an area, spend significant money for food, catering services, accommodations and other revenue items.

Councilwoman Hanbury invited Accommodations Tax Advisory Chair Julia Tucker to comment on the application. Ms. Tucker agreed that the City's daily filming fee was low, but Council was the body that could easily increase that expense to a more significant amount, such as \$1,000. She submitted that a film crew would pay that amount of money per day to film in the right location. As the benefits the film industry could bring to the island, she submitted that film crews are looking for lifestyle more than specifically the beach, and the island has a very attractive look and lifestyle for film companies. She also enumerated the bonus such revenue would be for winter business months, both in the food and hospitality industry.

Call for the question: MOTION PASSED EIGHT (8) TO ONE (1).

The Committee returned to the regular order of business.

5. Financial Statement.

Treasurer Suggs reviewed the Financial Statement and fund schedules: Fire Stations Replacement, Hospitality Tax Report, Marina and Bulkhead Report and Drainage Reserve Fund (**Exhibit A**).

6. New Business

A. #8 and #10 Thirteenth Avenue properties – status.

Administrator Tucker reported that, prior to demolition, the City has entered into the contract for a hazardous material survey for #8 and #10 Thirteenth Avenue in addition to the buildings at the Marina currently being occupied by Maintain, Inc and The Greenery. She submitted that all four properties might have a need for hazardous material disposal before the structures could be demolished. She reported that the previous owners of #8 and #10 Thirteenth Avenue have finished harvesting items they wanted from both structures and, until the residences have been demolished, the fire and police will temporarily conduct training in them, with proper notification of the neighbors.

B. Emergency Call Boxes.

Administrator Tucker noted that emergency call boxes for Front Beach were approved for expenditure some time ago, when the City began pursuing the idea of a wireless network system. Chief Buckhannon briefed the Committee on prices and call box options he gathered. Chief Buckhannon noted that the vendor Comarco could provide wireless call boxes for approximately \$19,000 for equipment and installation. He reported that Sikes could provide hardwire call boxes for around \$18,000 for equipment and installation. He recommended Comarco for ease of future expansion, if the City created a wireless network. He noted that the call boxes would be placed in the following areas along Front Beach, angled so that Front Beach security cameras could monitor them: Windjammer, Public restroom and large Municipal parking lot.

Councilwoman McMackin asked for the fund from which this expenditure was budgeted. Administrator Tucker noted that this item was budgeted from the Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund as part of the Front Beach Enhancement project.

Councilwoman Rice asked which device would work best in a severe weather situation like a hurricane, wireless or wired call boxes. The Committee noted that people would evacuate in the event of a significant hurricane. Chief Buckhannon noted there are limits to both the landline hard-wired version and the wireless cellular version. Chairman Taylor asked about the impact of the emergency boxes in the event of a power failure. Chief Buckhannon clarified that the operation of the Comarco boxes would not be impacted because they are wireless, but the Sikes boxes would have a twenty-four battery reserve before, in the event of a power outage, they would become inoperable. Councilman Bettelli clarified that the emergency call boxes would only be tied to the dispatchers, not to be used as telephones.

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli made a motion to award the contract to purchase three (3) emergency call boxes at the Front Beach to Comarco; seconded by Councilman Cronin.

Discussion:

Various Committee members reviewed the benefits of the Comarco wireless call boxes: no hardwiring needed, no need to disrupt the sidewalk system at Front Beach to trench install wires for the boxes, no retrofitting for future upgrades, the concern with the Front

Beach electricity being on a timer for night operation only and the wireless call boxes having to rely on battery operations for half a day every day.

Call for the question: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Councilman Taylor asked when the City could expect the call boxes installed and Chief Buckhannon suggested in the next two months.

B. Recommendations from Public Safety Committee:

i. Approve a Public Safety Outpost by the Front Beach Restrooms.

City Administrator Tucker noted that she needed clear direction from Council for a Public Safety Outpost, noting that the Public Safety Committee strongly recommended this concept at the Front Beach.

MOTION: Councilman Marino made a motion to approve a Public Safety Outpost at the Front Beach; seconded by Councilman Bettelli.

Discussion:

Councilman Marino noted that the Public Safety Committee strongly endorsed the concept of a Public Safety Outpost and the Front Beach and enumerated the reasons to include, high traffic congestion along Front Beach roadways and heavy beach patronage in the summertime contributing to the need for faster access by first responders to emergency calls in this area. He commented that the Public Safety Outpost would allow for a presence on the beach and ability for emergency personnel to position water rescue and other equipment in the area for quicker response time.

Councilman Cronin expressed concern with the lack of an operational plan for this building. Chairman Taylor noted that the City would gather the components together for this Outpost so Council could arrive at a final decision on this option. Councilman Cronin noted he is not interested in pursuing the identification of an additional site for the Public Safety Outpost and then, during development, realize that it would require additional staffing to maintain. Councilwoman Hanbury expressed desire to review information on particular plans and sites before she made any decision on the concept; Councilman Bettelli noted that the Committee is being asked to approve the concept, not a particular plan. Councilwoman McMackin echoed her concern with voting for a concept without enough detail. Councilman Marino suggested this vote would be similar to the Recreation Center Enhancement Project years in the past: Council votes to approve the concept, Committee and staff work to gather data and Council makes decisions on various aspects throughout the development project. Councilman Buckhannon noted that he envisioned this vote as a means to authorize Administrator Tucker to get the process moving. He submitted that she needs Council's approval to dedicate staff time and resources to pursuing the issue and to approach agencies and other entities with the concept for permit approval, site orientation, engineering and other advice. Councilwoman Rice expressed the desire to know where Fire Station 1 would

ultimately be located before pursuing the Public Safety Outpost concept. She recalled concern being expressed about the impact of high tide on the Front Beach, the difficulty with storing emergency vehicles in areas that would be flooded and the impact building would have in the dunes area.

The Committee continued to discuss the concept further, reiterating many of the concerns with a lack of plans, the need for increased presence at the Front Beach for security reason, the fact that this vote would be a conceptual plan approval, etc.

MOTION TO AMEND (First): Councilman Marino made a motion to amend the original motion to approve the concept of a Public Safety Outpost near Front Beach; seconded by Councilman Bettelli.

MOTION TO AMEND (Second): Councilwoman McMackin made a motion to include language as follows: explore the needed requirements to realize the concept of a Public Safety Outpost; seconded by Councilwoman Hanbury.

Call for the question on the Motion to Amend (Second): MOTION FAILED SIX (6) TO THREE (3) AGAINST.

Call for the question on the Motion to Amend (First): MOTION PASSED SEVEN (7) TO TWO (2).

ii. **Award Fire Station 2 landscaping contract to Pleasant Places, Inc. for \$10,007 from the Fire Station Replacement Fund.**

City Administrator Tucker briefly commented that landscaping for Fire Station 2 was incorporated into the project budget, but was not part of the design build contract.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to award the Fire Station 2 landscaping contract to Pleasant Places, Inc. for \$10,007 from the Fire Station Replacement Fund; seconded by Councilman Marino; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

C. Recommendation from the Public Works Committee:

i. **Approve \$2,700 for Eadies, Inc to repair drainage drop inlets on Sparrow Lane, from the Drainage Contingency Fund.**

City Administrator Tucker reported that the drainage inlets are in need of replacement with Director Pitts noting that the old brick storm water collection boxes have disintegrated. Director Pitts noted that this work included repair of one pothole on Sparrow Lane as well. He noted that the area floods and does not drain.

MOTION: Councilman Buckhannon made a motion to approve \$2,800 for Eadies, Inc. to repair drainage drop inlets on Sparrow Lane, from the Drainage Contingency Fund; seconded by Councilman Bettelli; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

ii. Award Citywide landscape contract to Miracle Green for \$52,225 from the Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund and Marina Fund as split in the FY07 budget.

Administrator Tucker reported that the City will engage a vendor to provide comprehensive landscape services to all the high-visibility City owned areas, such as Memory Park, City Hall Complex, Marina area, gateways on Breach Inlet and Connector/Palm Boulevard and the curve on Forty-first Avenue. She reported on the bids the City received, noting that the lowest bidder was a very new company, which had only started within the past year. She reported that the Public Works Committee concurred with staff concerns about engaging with a new company when this is the first year the City would have a comprehensive landscaping contract. She further noted that another bidder had aberrations in its bid submittal relative to planting flat quotes, raising concerns that the number of flats the firm estimated to do the project properly was insufficient. She noted that Public Works Committee recommended Miracle Green, the low qualified bidder.

MOTION: Councilwoman McMackin made a motion to award the City wide landscape contract to Miracle Green for \$52,225 from the Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund and Marina Fund as split in the FY07 budget; seconded by Councilman Cronin; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Councilwoman Hanbury expressed her concern with landscapers not understanding the difference between plantings that should and should not be removed, based upon her past experiences. She did express pleasure that the cost for the citywide landscaping contract proved to be much lower than she anticipated.

D. Recommendation from Personnel Committee: continued discussion of additional staffing for General Government.

Administrator Tucker noted the Committee was aware of her increasing workload and the many projects which do not receive the level of attention they need because of her need for additional staff. She commented that an illustration of the need for additional help would be the website, which the community is embracing along with the list serve service. She noted that she needed an employee dedicated to handle website issues in addition to assisting her with projects. Administrator Tucker noted an employee who could serve a dual role would be advantageous: an assistant for her as City Administrator and a personal relations/communications individual for the City. She noted that, while the employee would assist her as City Administrator, the new employee's primary function would be to maintain the website and list serve. She further noted that the job description provided to the Committee was derived from language the Committee has seen in the past, input from VC3 and language from advertisements she has gathered for similar positions. She acknowledged that space location would be a challenge but that she would find an office space for this new person.

Chairman Taylor noted that he was under impression that this employee would be included as part of the budget process, but Administrator Tucker impressed upon him before this meeting the need and hope to have an employee as soon as possible.

Councilwoman McMackin expanded upon City Administrator Tucker's comments noting that the City has precedent for hiring employees out of the budget cycle, most recently with a Building Department employee who was hired part time then moved to full-time status. She noted that Council approved the concept of the list serve service and a General Government employee already. She applauded Mr. Jacobs for his efforts with the list serve, but noted it was time for a City employee to undertake the service in addition to the website and other projects to assist Linda.

MOTION: Councilwoman McMackin made a motion to approve a new employee for General Government in the position of Communications and Website Coordinator/Assistant to the Administrator; seconded by Councilwoman Hanbury.

Discussion:

There was significant discussion regarding this new position, with all Committee members acknowledging how busy General Government staff remains and the need for Administrator Tucker to receive assistance.

Mayor Sottile acknowledged that he utilizes City Administrator Tucker and City Clerk Darrow perhaps more than any other member on Council and complimented them for their hard work. He acknowledged that all General Government staff is stretched, but none more so than Administrator Tucker. He agreed that there is a need for additional assistance in General Government, but questioned whether this matter should be a part of the budget cycle or not, examining all positions in General Government.

Other Council members, such as Councilwomen Rice, McMackin and Hanbury, encouraged immediate action, noting that Council discussed additional department staffing last budget cycle, the website needed to be launched and maintained soon, other projects need attention and waiting six (6) months would prolong an action that is already overdue. Councilwoman Rice noted that the process of locating and hiring a new employee would take some time, even if approved this month, and submitted the best time to hire a new employee and train him/her would be now, during the winter "down" time, not in summer at high season.

Councilman Cronin asked what the Committee was being asked to approve, noting he needed to know the specific expenditure. City Administrator Tucker referred to the job description, noting that the starting salary recommended by Personnel Committee for this position would be \$38,000; however, she acknowledged that a candidate with significant experience would require a higher starting salary. Councilman Cronin then asked for the other costs the City would incur for this new position, other than salary. Administrator Tucker provided the following salary and expenses:

Minimum: \$38,000 salary - \$50,990 City expense for salary and benefits
Median: \$51,854 salary - \$65,000 City expense for salary and benefits
High: \$59,999 salary - \$80,000 City expense for salary and benefits

Councilman Marino acknowledged the need for assistance in General Government, but lamented that the City would need to pay \$60,000 to \$80,000 to inform citizens of Council activities that would be free to all who attended Council meetings. He raised issues with the minimum qualifications for the job, as listed in the job description. Councilman Marino commented that the position duties appear to call for essentially an Assistant City Administrator who has some website experience. He acknowledged it would take a special person to fill in the gaps at City Hall, noting information technology skills would not be sufficient. He asked the Personnel Committee and Council to review the job description more closely and suggested this request go through the budget approval process. He also suggested the Administrator could begin recruiting candidates and then approach Council.

Councilwoman Hanbury made some comments, noting that she has often asked for assistance for General Government, asked if this salary was comparable with other staff in General Government and submitted that she felt the real need was for additional help in the department to handle the “meat” of the workload that Linda has to undertake, such as projects. She submitted that website management was “gravy” in the overall scope of work that needed to be done.

After continued discussion the following motions were made.

MOTION TO AMEND (First): Councilman Marino made a motion to include the new employee in the FY08 budget; NO SECOND.

The Committee discussed Councilman Marino’s suggestion, which failed as a motion due to a lack of second. Councilman Buckhannon advocated beginning the process of hiring a new employee, noting the length of time it will take to advertise, identify and hire a new employee and then train the employee before the summer peak season was underway. Due to unusual circumstances and pressing projects, Councilman Buckhannon advocated an out of cycle position increase. Councilman Bettelli noted that Council could approve the job description with approval of the job.

MOTION TO AMEND (Second): Councilman Marino made a motion for the Personnel Committee to return to Council with a revised job description that enhanced the minimal qualifications section; seconded by Councilman Cronin.

Discussion:

Councilwoman McMackin acknowledged that the job description qualifications might need reconsideration, but implored the Committee not to delay a decision on the approval of a new employee for another month. She noted that dragging out the decision process would be painful and unnecessary. She submitted that, regardless of the job qualifications section, the Committee should know now whether they feel that a new position is warranted or not. She submitted that Administrator Tucker was in the best position to know what she needed in General Government and could complete the job description.

She further submitted that often the hiring process was intuitive, with the hiring agent knowing in interviews what qualities a candidate would have that would be serve the department's needs. She repeated her request for a decision tonight.

Councilman Cronin noted that he was operating on the understanding that the Committee was proceeding with a decision tonight, with the anticipation of a revised job description in the future.

Call for the question on the amendment: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Call for the question on the main amended motion: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

8. Miscellaneous.

A. Budget Calendar for 2007.

Chairman Taylor reviewed the proposed budget calendar prepared by staff. Councilman Buckhannon stressed the desire for department heads to be extremely conservative with budgetary requests, requesting only absolutely essential items be brought forward this fiscal budget. He noted the current and future expenses related to the replacement of the Fire Stations and other big projects as reasons for fiscal conservatism.

B. The Greenery, LLC Lease Termination – January 31, 2007

Administrator Tucker reported that Maintain and The Greenery, LLC were scheduled to vacate their premises by March 3, 2007; however, The Greenery, LLC has informed the City it intends to vacate its site at the Marina by January 31, 2007.

Angler's Mini-Mart Sale

Mayor Sottile noted that Angler's Mini-Mart was recently sold to The Pantry, Inc. He noted that the store's lease has one (1) year remaining on it and did not know whether the Pantry, Inc. intended to seek re-negotiation of the lease with the City at present. He suggested that now would be a good opportunity for the City to explore the opportunity to address some long-term capital needs with any possible lease renegotiation efforts.

Councilman Bettelli, Chairman of the Real Property Advisory Committee, noted that the Committee discussed replacing the restrooms by the boat ramp and suggested that this project might be impacted by possible improvements The Pantry, Inc. may wish to make to the mini-mart site. Chairman Taylor suggested a meeting between The Pantry, Inc representatives and the City. Councilman Bettelli then noted that the City planned to demolish sites currently occupied by The Greenery and Maintain. He noted that there was some discussion of a future park on The Greenery site, but the Committee continues to discuss all options for the area. At present, Councilman Bettelli commented that the City planned to clear the sites, level them and use the space for temporary overflow parking.

D. Next Ways & Means Meeting – 5:45 p.m., Tuesday, February 20, 2007

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee Taylor, Chairman