CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE 5:45 p.m., Tuesday, April 15, 2008

The regular meeting/budget workshop of the Ways and Means Committee was held at 5:45 p.m., Tuesday, April 15, 2008 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Council members Bettelli, Buckhannon, Cronin, Duffy, Loftus, Piening, Rice, Taylor and Mayor Sottile, City Administrator Tucker, City Treasurer Suggs, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Call to Order and acknowledgement that the press and the public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes – Regular Meeting of March 18, 2008

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 18, 2008 as submitted; Mayor Sottile seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 3. Citizens' Comments None
- 4. Financial Statement Treasurer Suggs

Treasurer Suggs reported that she had used the March 31, 2008 financial statement in an effort to forecast how the City would end FY 2007-2008, and she had concluded that the City would not generate any significant surplus in the General Fund. As she discussed the revenue accounts, she informed the Committee that she anticipated shortfalls in Property Taxes, Building Permits and Interest Income; she added that there were also expenses which would not actually be incurred this fiscal year, so she expects the City to end the fiscal year at the breakeven point. Treasurer Suggs explained to Committee members that the 35% spending shown in the General Fund did not include one year's debt service on the Public Safety Building, one (1) principal payment on the Recreation Center with one (1) semi-annual interest payment; if these items were added to expenditures, the General Funds would indicate 75% spending.

The next schedule the Treasurer addressed was "Monthly Summary of 2% Hospitality Tax Revenues." She reported that \$266,074 had been collected of a budgeted amount of \$430,000.

This was the first month of the Beach Nourishment Project schedule to which had been added attorney's fees including those of City Attorney Sottile for work that he has done that was directly attributable to beach nourishment.

On the Fire Station 2 schedule, the Treasurer reported that final payment has been made to Trident as well as the retainage to the landscaper. The schedule showed that the residual on the bond and interest total \$324,597 that would make 100% of the FY 2008-2009 debt service payment with \$63,339 left over to be applied to the FY 2009-2010 payment.

The last schedule was for the Public Safety Building that showed the spending through April 8, 2008, with additions of interest and a transfer in from Hospitality Taxes, for an ending balance of \$1,125,711.

Councilwoman Rice asked if the City were receiving a decent interest rate and was told that the Local Government Investment Fund was paying 2.9%.

5. Old Business

A. FY 2008-2009 Budget Workshop including the following:

1. Bulkhead Replacement – Chris Moore, Jon Guerry Taylor

Councilman Taylor reminded the Committee that a \$1.1 million dollar revenue bond was included in the "blue" version of the budget to be added with existing City funds to finance the replacement of the bulkhead. He informed that Committee that the changes made by Committees to the budget were reflected in the new "blue" versions of the budget they have received; in addition, the staff has provided a summary sheet of the major additions by category and deletions contained in the FY 2008-2009 budget.

Administrator Tucker introduced Chris Moore as an engineer with Jon Guerry Taylor who has been working with the City on the marina bulkhead throughout the process having been selected through a competitive bidding process. She related that the City has the design and a permit; the decision needed to be made now as to whether or not the City was going to proceed with bulkhead replacementconstruction in the fall of 2008.

Chris Moore reported that the engineers had made another inspection of the bulkhead at the end of March and, as in the past, had found significant decay and wood rot in the inter-tidal zone. They also found bowing at the boat ramp and a kick out area behind the store. During the last inspection, they set several control points that would indicate additional outward movement when the bulkhead was inspected again in a couple of months. One last point Mr. Moore made was to note that there has been significant soil loss due to wood decay and large holes in the bulkhead. When he was asked for his recommendation, he stated that the bulkhead needed to be replaced as soon as possible. Mayor Sottile acknowledged that the bulkhead had been a source of concern for some time, but that it was unlikely that it would totally give way. He asked Mr. Moore how many "hot spots" existed in the bulkhead. Mr. Moore responded that the area on either side of the boat ramp there was significant bowing, as well as in an area behind the store, and major kick out between the fuel dock and the store.

Councilman Taylor asked Mr. Moore when work would start if the project were approved tonight; Mr. Moore answered that the bid would go out in May or June with working to begin in October 2008. Due to regulations set by OCRM and the Corps of Engineers, dredging could not occur before November 2009 to be completed by the end of March 2010; the City's dredging permit would expire in June 2010.

When asked how the City would make up the one million dollar shortfall, Administrator Tucker replied that it would be paid for by a revenue bond to be repaid from marina revenues. She explained that there were three (3) areas when a possible failure concerned her -(1) the fuel dock, (2) compromise to the store and deck and (3) the restaurant. She did note that the City had to be cognizant of how much it borrowed in any one (1) year in order not to affect the City's bonding capacity.

Councilwoman Rice remarked that the Real Property Advisory committee had looked at fixing only the problem areas of the bulkhead, but that cost was in excess of half a million dollars.

Councilman Duffy asked what the expected life span was of the proposed new bulkhead; Mr. Moore explained that the wall would be constructed of coated steel and, if properly maintained, should be functional for at least forty (40) years.

Councilman Taylor noted that the City was still sixty (60) days away from having to pass the FY 2008-2009 budget, so there would be no problem leaving any item in the budget for another Committee meeting and Ways and Means meeting. He did inform the Committee that the General Fund portion of the budget had to be advertised next week, but, as long as the figures did not increase, the "blue" budget could be advertised.

Administrator Tucker remarked that there might be sixty (60) days to adopt the new budget, but there were not sixty (60) days for the City to make its decision on the bulkhead if it intended to proceed in the fall of 2008.

Councilman Taylor informed the Committee that the Real Property Advisory Committee has asked Chris Moore and his team to devise a plan of immediate action should there be some type of breach in the bulkhead before the work began.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to leave the bulkhead replacement in the FY 2008-2009 budget and to move forward with the process to replace the bulkhead; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker asked that the Committee members turn to page 34 of the budget to see the twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) that had been put into the budget to deal with fuel, sewer and power lines that ran under the docks where the fuel docks were located, and the dock pressed on them at extremely low tide. She explained that she did not think the problem could be fully addressed until dredging was done. Mr. Moore assured the Committee that some issues would be improved with the replacement of the bulkhead. When the bulkhead was replaced, there would be the opportunity to carefully examine the situation and determine if anything in addition could be done, prior to dredging. When asked by Councilwoman Rice about the potential for a spill, Mr. Moore responded that he had observed the dock at high tide, but that definitely the potential existed. Mr. Moore responded to Councilman Cronin that he had not examined the lines for degradation.

Having completed discussions relative to the bulkhead, Administrator Tucker began a review of the FY 2008-2009 budget highlights that were defined on the single blue sheet. She noted that she and the Treasurer strongly recommended a millage increase of 2.9% per the state approved CPI amount; she distributed two (2) handouts relative to the CPI, i.e. one that stated the law itself and the second had computations illustrating the effect of the increase. The Administrator elaborated on her reasons for supporting the millage increase as follows:

- The Isle of Palms had very few ways of absorbing the increases in expenses for which it has no control;
- The Treasurer has foreshadowed that the City did not anticipate making its budget in FY 2007-2008 based on decreased revenues; and
- The City would incur a deficit of \$80,000 for FY 2007-2008 and a potential deficit of \$139,000 for FY 2008-2009.

She reviewed the law that states a municipality is allowed to increase the millage based on growth factor, and there has been no noticeable growth for the City this year. A second allowance to increase the millage is to pay off bond indebtedness, which was done to pay for the Public Safety Building. The third reason that a millage increase is allowed is to pay for a prior year's deficit. She summarized saying that, as the budget is presented now, if the City does not consider the CPI increase, then this time next year the Council could be wrestling with a deficit for the following year and having only that mechanism to raise money. She did advise the Committee that expenses could still be cut, but the staff had made all the cuts it was comfortable making without direction. Administrator Tucker continued the review of the budget highlights scheduled, she informed the Committee that there had been a further increase to fuel from the "pink" budget to the "blue" budget, and unleaded fuel was now in the budget for all departments at \$3.70 per gallon. The drainage contingency had also been decreased \$25,000 from the "pink" budget to the "blue" budget.

In response to there being no addition to the Disaster Recovery Relief Fund for the FY 2008-2009 budget, Mayor Sottile stated that he thought it would benefit the City more to put the \$75,000 earmarked for Underground Wiring into the Disaster Recovery Relief Fund.

At this time, Councilman Taylor explained that the Administrator would go through the "blue" budget page by page to answer questions and/or resolve concerns of the Committee members.

Administrator Tucker's initial comments were that the FY 2008-2009 revenues were projected to be higher than those of FY 2007-2008, but Treasurer Suggs had explained that the City anticipated a revenue shortfall, so this was an area of concern. She pointed to the \$136,617 on page 1, line 7 as the amount the City anticipated collecting from the proposed CPI increase. She then pointed to lines 40-42 noting that all of the cost of the Beach Services Officers expense had been to be funded by Municipal Accommodations Fee and Hospitality taxes and one-half of the expense for Public Works temporary labor to be funded by Municipal Accommodations taxes as well.

Having reviewed the budgeted revenues for FY 2008-2009, Councilman Loftus stated that there was only a 5.4% increase in revenues, but that the City had experienced an increase in expenses over the past five (5) years of 53%. He explained that he felt strongly that the Committee had to look for additional reductions – to determine which items were "wants" and which were "needs." Councilman Loftus added that an increase in the CPI was simply a tax increase that was compounded year after year.

Councilwoman Rice asked why *Alcohol Permits* revenue was reduced; Administrator Tucker related that the state had changed it process by allowing the businesses to purchase permits that were valid for longer periods of time.

On page 2, the Administrator noted that there would be no increase for the Mayor and Council reflected in the FY 2008-2009 budget because they can only receive an increase in salary after a general election. Therefore, they will not be eligible for an increase until January 1, 2010. Councilman Loftus noted that he was seeing an increase in every department attributed to the fees to be imposed by Charleston County; he, therefore, asked how many radios the City had in operation. Administrator Tucker replied that there were approximately one hundred fifty-one (151) between

personnel and vehicles; Councilman Loftus the questioned that, with nine-one (91) employees, how many radios did employees carry. Administrator Tucker explained that an employee might have a walkie-talkie and a radio in the vehicle; she added that not every City employee had a radio and that some departments shared radios among employees. She also reported that, when the City had purchased the new radios, they had carefully reviewed the numbers and reduced the number as much as they were comfortable; the City also made decisions in the types of radios attempting to save money. He expressed his opinion that the City needed to reduce the number of radios being operated in the City.

Mayor Sottile stated that to cut communications was playing with danger because public safety was paramount to this City, as it was with all cities. He noted that he thought the City was right in going with the County communication system and that the move would save the City money in the long run. The Mayor remarked that communications could not be cut when there were fire and police personnel living all over the County and who were on call twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Councilman Taylor asked for a breakdown of radios by department and vehicle for members of the Committee.

Administrator Tucker proceeded to page 3 of the "blue" budget, General Government Operating to point out Column F, line 31; she explained that the \$58,000 had been a "plug" amount for making salary adjustments for a compensation study. She noted that lines 37 and 39 had been reduced from the "pink" budget, because of the proceeds remaining from Fire Station 2 to pay the bond – she cautioned that the full expense would be on the next fiscal budget. The Administrator explained that the recodification process was ongoing and that she did not know the actual cost; there was the possibility that it would be less than the amount projected in the budget.

For the Police Operating Budget, Administrator Tucker related that there had been the addtion of four (4) wireless cards for vehicles to the *Telephone and Cable* expenses; there were no other significant changes from the "pink" budget.

Changes to the Fire Operating Budget pointed out by the Administrator were to *Vehicle Maintenance* to keep Engine 2 operating properly, new wireless cards for *Telephone and Cable* and the reduction to insurance for the liability that would have been incurred by twelve (12) additional fire personnel.

Councilwoman Rice asked for an explanation about the reduction from FY 2007-2008 to FY 2008-2009 in *Non-capital Tools and Equipment*, Treasurer Suggs answered that the Department had specific purchases planned for FY 2007-2008 that would not be

repeated for FY 2008-2009. The amount reported for this budget was simply a place holder for what might come up during the year.

Councilman Buckhannon again commented on "increased based on actual" as his understanding of a budget was that expenses were to stay under the projected amount not increase annually due to overages.

Mayor Sottile had issues with an increase to *Vehicle Maintenance* based on Engine 2 that he thought was a spare; Chief Graham explained that it was not a spare but that it was unmanned. The Mayor added that he did not see the need for added maintenance for a vehicle that primarily stayed in the garage. Treasurer Suggs stated that Engine 2 was scheduled to be replaced in 2010.

When Administrator Tucker reviewed the Public Works budget, Councilman Duffy asked if there was a regulation that demanded the City pickup garbage twice a week in the summer. He was told that there were two (2) pickups due to volume and the heat, but Administrator Tucker stated that there was no requirement to do so. On a related topic, Councilwoman Rice asked why *Temporary Labor* and *Service Contracts* had been increased; the Administrator related that the increase to temporary labor had been a direct function of actual use in being responsive to the needs of residents. The contracts had increased as a result of a fuel surcharge being implemented by the place that accepts the City's debris. On temporary labor, Treasurer Suggs reported that Public Works was seldom fully staffed; she added that Public Works was under budget on salaries while over on temporary labor.

There have been no significant changes between the "pink" and "blue" budgets for the Building/Planning Operating Budget according to the Administrator.

In the Recreation Operating Budget, Administrator Tucker pointed to line 228, *Employee Training,* as a result of continuing the employee wellness program. Councilman Duffy asked if the City received an insurance rate reduction as for having this program; the Administrator answered negatively, but stated that the Recreation Department had might receive a grant to subsidize it. Councilman Taylor explained that the City was a member of a health insurance pool and that, if the program resulted in a reduction in claims, the City might be able to withdraw from the pool to receive a better rate.

Councilman Duffy asked if all department actively pursued grants; Administrator Tucker stated that grants were pursued when it was worth the staff's time to do so because the socio-economic position of this City sometimes did not make the City grant competitive. Whenever there was an opportunity of success, the application was made; the 21st Avenue beach access was an example of the City's receipt of a grant.

The second page of the Recreation Department Operating Budget had no changes per the Administrator.

For the Judicial and Legal Operating Budget, the Administrator reported that *Employee Training* had been refined downward pursuant to a conversation with Judge Harper relative to courses required to maintain her certification. Councilman Piening commented that he had been told that Judge Harper worked twice a month for approximately five (5) hours each time; based on that, he calculated that she was paid \$379 per hour, which he reported was more that Supreme Court Justices earn. Councilman Taylor asked that the Treasurer prepare information for Council concerning the amount paid to each judge and the amount that would go toward the judges' training.

Administrator Tucker explained that page 14 of the "blue" budget was a reconciliation page, and it showed a transfer of \$266,370 to Capital Projects for future projects. The General Funds budget was concluded at page 14.

Beginning on Page 19 were Municipal Accommodations Fees Revenue, followed by expenditures from that fund. Administrator Tucker pointed out that part of the debt service for the Recreation Center and all of the debt service for the Renourishment Bond would be paid from this fund. Also paid from here were the trimming and replacement of palm trees, replacements of flags, Christmas decorations, costs related to the website, the new safety harnesses for the Fire Department, the solid waste disposal fees and a good portion of the Front Beach expenses. She explained that four thousand dollars (\$4,000) had been added to *Service Contracts* for Bill Schupp's proposal to fill in holes in the beach three days per week at \$95 per day following the Public Works and Public Safety meeting.

Hospitality Tax Revenues and Expenditures were depicted on page 22 showing a contribution to the Beach Renourishment Reserve Fund and contributions toward payments for various City-owned vehicles.

The following page was devoted to the Volunteer Fire 1% Fund; Administrator Tucker explained that a portion of the insurance rates that are paid were returned to the Fire Departments to use following very specific guidelines. This 1% on all homeowners' fire insurance policies budget was built based on the ways that the Fire Department normally spent these funds. Chief Graham remarked that the funds were intended to be used for entertainment and fitness.

Reflected on pages 24-26 were the Accommodations Tax Fund Revenues and Expenditures; line 276 represented the \$30,000 appropriated last year for an island wide parking study to which no vendor responded.

MOTION: Councilwoman Rice moved to remove the \$30,000 for parking study from the FY 2008-2009 budget; Councilman Bettelli seconded.

Councilman Bettelli noted that, until the City could take a position on obstructions in the rights-of-way, he did not feel that a parking study would be worthwhile. Councilman Loftus expressed his opinion that there was a very real need for additional parking on the island and that this study could provide some answers.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED on a VOTE OF 9 TO 1 with Councilman Loftus casting the negative vote.

Administrator Tucker reported that the municipal parking lots have been scraped annually, so \$7,500 had been set aside for that purpose. She also stated that the roof at the public restroom needed to be replaced primarily because there was electronic equipment housed in the attic of the building; the FY 2008-2009 budget included an amount toward that repair.

The Administrator noted that a new fund was reported on page 27 – Beach Renourishment Fund to reflect this project.

Interest only was reported on the Disaster Recovery Fund on page 28.

Administrator Tucker commented that there was very little activity in the Federal Narcotics Fund. Victims Assistance has been split out from the General Fund since the City now has a full-time Victims Assistance Office; there are again restrictions on how this money can be used.

Marina Fund Revenues began on page 32 with total revenues, including transfers in of \$688,488. Expenses continued on page 33 with the debt service on the marina bonds; the amount of \$8,000 for a mobile restroom for the summer was eliminated from this "blue" budget. *Professional Services* has been increased to accommodate a parking study for \$10,000 and two (2) bulkhead monitorings.

Councilman Bettelli asked if the parking study for the marina was necessary; Councilman Taylor informed him that the Real Property Committee was going to look for a college student who could do the study.

MOTION: Councilman Loftus moved to remove the \$10,000 Parking Study for the Marina; Councilman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

As has been discussed earlier, there was the inclusion of \$10,000 for materials for the extension of the finger docks and \$25,000 for changes to the lines that run under the docks.

Administrator Tucker explained that the staff's proposals for paying for Capital items from the City's various funds. The expenditures have been discussed at the Committee level and have been touched on tonight.

2. Compensation Study

Councilman Taylor recapped that the Archers had appeared at the March 18 Ways and Means meeting to discuss the methods used in preparing the compensation study and to answer questions from the Committee. The Personnel Committee has discussed the study on at least three (3) occasions and has failed to come to a consensus or to make a recommendation.

Administrator Tucker again directed the Committee's attention to the blue budget highlights sheet that stated a one-time adjustment based on the March 18 Archer presentation of \$317,107 including fringes. She proposed reducing that amount, but, at the same time, leaving the Personnel Committee enough funds to make decisions subsequent to the passage of the budget regarding the Archer study; she offered a reduction of \$101,545 to \$215,562. The Administrator reminded the Committee of the \$58,000 from the General Government Operating Budget that had been a placeholder for compensation increases in the current budget year; by applying that amount to the \$215,562, there would be an impact of \$157,562 to the FY 2008-2009. Such a change would allow for some of what Archer proposed to be retained in the budget giving the Personnel Committee some flexibility to make decisions. Administrator Tucker expressed her feeling that the study pointed to the fact that the City has a challenge before it that was greater than was contemplated when the FY 08 budget was originally built.

Councilman Taylor summarized the choices before the Committee as follows:

- Approve the budget with the numbers that were in it;
- Approve the alternate submitted by the Administrator;
- Scrap the study totally for FY 2008-2009; or
- Devise another option.

A great deal of discussion followed that included consideration of eliminating the COLA increase and going to merit system, addressing only the positions within the City that are known to be high in turnover and generally not competitively paid, returning to the Personnel Committee to made a decision and recommendation to Ways and Means,

and allowing sufficient money for the Administrator to work with the Personnel Manager in conjunction with the Personnel Committee to devise a plan.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to send the issues on the Compensation Study back to the Personnel Committee with the \$58,000 originally set aside for that purpose; Councilman Piening seconded.

Administrator Tucker remarked that, with the \$215,000+ and the consent of the Personnel Committee, she could make immediate adjustments relative to ways that were contemplated in the FY 2007-2008 budget; then the Personnel Committee would have the flexibility to make recommendations regarding some of the other positions where the City has seen high turnover.

Since the Committee could not agree on a fair amount of money to include in the budget to address compensation issues, Councilman Taylor offered for the Personnel Committee to meet to agree at a dollar amount and to make that recommendation to City Council. Councilman Taylor asked that the Administrator have a plan to present to the Committee on how she would spend that money.

Call for the Question: Mayor Sottile withdrew his motion.

B. Approval of Cost Overrun of \$10,757 on Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that she had foreshadowed this expense based on the fact that OCRM had required basically a re-write of the Plan that produced a \$10,757 cost overrun.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to approve the \$10,757 cost overrun on the Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 6. New Business
 - A. Recommendations from Real Property Committee
 - 1. \$1,600 for electrical repairs to TidalWave Water Sports
 - 2. Additional \$5,000 for materials to complete re-planking of face dock

MOTION: Councilwoman Rice moved to approve the recommendations of the Real Property Committee totaling \$6,600; Councilman Cronin seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Recommendation from Public Works Committee \$13,200 for Eadie's to restructure the 30th Avenue Ditch

Administrator Tucker commented that there had been discussion at the Public Works Committee that Wild Dunes should perform the work as part of their permit, but they were only required to do ditch maintenance, not restructure for better drainage.

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to approve \$13,200 for Eadie's to restructure the 30th Avenue ditch; Councilman Cronin seconded.

Councilman Bettelli remarked that the funds were available in the Drainage Contingency Fund. He also noted that as the other Eadie's work was being done, it had been observed that this was where the water was trying to pass through; once it has been sculpted, the water would flow easily through. Director Pitts commented that cleaning the ditch would not effect the cost to Eadie's to stage its equipment and restructure the ditch.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Recommendation from Recreation Committee \$11,500 from FY 2007-2008 budget to (1) clean, seal, and paint exposed exterior metal beams and (2) replace gutters on gymnasium

MOTION: Councilman Cronin moved to approve the recommendation from the Recreation Committee totaling \$11,500; Councilwoman Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Recommendation from Public Safety Committee Consideration of Proposal from Bill Schupp regarding Beach Holes

Administrator Tucker explained that Mr. Schupp had submitted a proposal to fill in holes on the beach three (3) days per week at \$95 per day.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to approve Bill Schupp's proposal to fill in the holes on the beach; Councilman Bettelli seconded.

Councilwoman Rice asked what the scope of the work would be and was informed it would be the entire length of the beach.

Councilman Taylor asked what would happen if the ordinance on beach holes passed; Lieutenant Wright stated that, if an officer did not see a person digging the hole, the officer could not charge him. Mayor Sottile stated that the Public Safety Committee had unanimously endorsed this proposal, and he thought that the City should try it for a season and possibly drop the ordinance. He had hoped that the problem could be eliminated through education and not by an ordinance. He added that both the City Attorney and the Police Chief thought that the ordinance was unenforceable.

Call for the Question: The motion PASSED on a vote of 9 to 1; Councilman Loftus voted against the motion.

7. Miscellaneous

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee members that the Taste of the Island was Saturday, April 26th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: With no further business to come before the Ways and Means Committee, Councilman Bettelli moved to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.; Councilwoman Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland City Clerk