

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

12:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 5, 2015

The regular meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 5, 2015 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Committee members Burgis, Haynie, Miller, Rice and Vice Chair Nelson, City Administrator Tucker, Treasurer Suggs and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. Committee member Covington's absence was excused.

1. Vice Chair Nelson 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: Ms. Rice moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 6, 2015 as submitted; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Administrator Tucker announced that Franny Russell had resigned from the Committee and her position as Chair because she has had to move off the island. The Personnel Committee will review the candidate pool to determine whether there is someone qualified from the hospitality industry to fill the vacant seat; she encouraged the Board members to invite anyone to apply they thought would serve the community well.

The Administrator suggested that the Board continue to meet through the end of the year with Mr. Nelson as Chair in the absence of Ms. Russell; she will make that recommendation to the Personnel Committee at their next meeting.

4. Financial Statements – Treasurer Suggs

FY15 Preliminary and Unaudited Financial Statements

Treasurer Suggs noted that the City's annual audit will be at the end of the month and that the auditors will likely be on the island for a month.

(Copies of all financial documents are attached to the historical record of the meeting.)

Today the City received the fourth quarter check for State ATAX; it totaled five hundred seventy-five thousand four hundred forty-three dollars (\$575,443.). The schedule on the long sheet includes this payment and gives a good historical perspective; it shows that the fourth quarter of FY15 exceeded the fourth quarter of FY14 by three percent (3%) and the fiscal year total ended three percent (3%) ahead of the FY14 total. The ATAX fund has approximately one million and a half dollars (\$1,500,000) in the bank; the majority of which is invested with the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) where the interest rate is the highest.

In reviewing the expenditures, the FY15 budget for the operations of the public restrooms was exceeded by three thousand three hundred seventy-two dollars and thirty cents (\$3,372.30); the

overage was generated by keeping the restrooms open longer at the request of the local businesses and the increased frequency of power washing the restrooms.

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to approve the overage of \$3,372.30; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The fees paid for the Phases III and IV of the parking management and beach parking permit plan exceeded budget by eleven hundred twenty-seven dollars and twenty-seven cents (\$1,127.27); the overage is attributable to paying legal fees, specifically for the parking management plan.

MOTION: Ms. Miller moved to approve the overage of \$1,127.27 to the Stantec/parking management plan; Ms. Haynie seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Treasurer Suggs reported that due to some misunderstandings with the shooter, the City only spent eighty-five hundred dollars (\$8,500) for the July 4th fireworks display; some incidental expenses may come in, but the City has essentially paid for the 2015 display.

Ms. Rice asked whether the City would change shooters for July 4th, 2016. Administrator Tucker responded that the City has a contract to use them in 2016. Corrective measures have been taken to avoid future problems; the Administrator assured the Committee that East Coast Pyrotechnics has good reputation and comes with very good references from other local governments for whom they do really big shows.

Administrator Tucker added that part of the problem with this year's show was the threat of rain because once the shells are uncovered, they should be shot. If the rain starts, there is no show. City staff is confident that any misunderstandings can be resolved and not repeated.

The purchase of the new garbage packer truck also exceeded the budget; the ATAX portion of the overage was three hundred thirty-three dollars and sixty-seven cents (\$333.67).

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to approve the overage of \$333.67 on the garbage packer truck; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Treasurer Suggs reported that several line items were under budget for FY15; the amount under budget for the year is three hundred fifty thousand seven hundred forty-two dollars and forty-five cents (\$350,742.45) based on the preliminary and unaudited results.

Two (2) items were added to the Miscellaneous expenditures, they are

- Labor to install equipment on FY14 Fire Department pickup truck; City never received invoice \$425.00
- 50% of cost for cannonball display 650.00

Since the majority of the Committee did not know the story behind the cannonball, Administrator Tucker explained that, in the off-shore dredging renourishment project in 2008; the dredge sucked up this cannonball from two (2) miles off-shore. Until such time as the experts concluded that the cannonball was not going to explode, all work on the beach stopped and the area was evacuated; the cannonball was moved off the beach and finally delivered to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. After a period of years, the park rangers notified the City that it needed to pick up its cannonball, and, for about a year, it sat in a corner of City Hall waiting for staff to locate someone who was qualified to preserve it. Someone was located who would do the preservation at a reasonable cost, and the work is nearly complete; Council voted to display the cannonball at the Recreation Center in a properly covered case. The money above pays a portion of the display expense.

MOTION: Vice Chair Nelson moved to approve the Miscellaneous Expenses related to the Fire Department pickup truck and 50% of the cost of the cannonball display; Ms. Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Referring to the last financial document, Treasurer Suggs reminded the Committee that this schedule is the projection of revenue and expenses attributed to the State ATAX fund for a projection of the year-end carryover. Adding in the impact of the fourth quarter check, the year's revenue is one million one hundred eleven thousand ten dollars (\$1,111,010); the surplus for the year will be one hundred fifty-four thousand dollars (\$154,000) and the projected year-end balance to take into 2016 is one million eight hundred fifty-two thousand dollars (\$1,852,000).

Ms. Rice questioned that the City was carrying forward too much money. The Treasurer responded that the State has rules that stipulate a municipality cannot carry funds over more than two (2) years; the City has taken the approach that it is first in, first out, so the funds are constantly rolling. Since the City's revenue and expenditures are so high, the fund roll eliminates the worry of carrying over too much.

5. Old Business – None

6. New Business

A. Application from the Police Department for \$1,700 for public access to the IOP Connector traffic camera

Administrator Tucker recalled that the City has cameras located throughout the City in high traffic areas; their primary purpose has been security, and they are monitored in the Police Department. The camera that is at the intersection of 14th Avenue and Palm Boulevard shows the inflow and outflow of traffic on the Connector; staff believes there is a demand from visitors and residents to see that camera. Staff has been working to find a way to make that camera feed available to the public at the most reasonable price possible. The goal is to have someone check an app on her or his phone to see that the traffic coming onto the island before making a final decision about coming to the Isle of Palms for the day or afternoon, thereby eliminating some of the aggravation people experience when ingressing or egressing the island. The

Police Department, which has been monitoring that camera for about a year, were tasked with the responsibility of finding a way to make this feed available to the public.

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Chief Buckhannon reported that they had gotten pricing from four (4) vendors to provide a link from the City's website and a mobile app drivers could use. One (1) of the first hurdles encountered was to separate this feed from the City's inter-office network so it could exist in such a way that the security of the City's network would not be in jeopardy by people accessing the camera feed. The vendor estimates of cost ranged from five hundred dollars (\$500) to nearly fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000); the Chief opined that the vendor on the high end did not fully understand the project because they had never done anything like it in the past. Staff finally learned the name of the vendor SCDOT uses for its SC511 feed and to maintain their mobile app and contacted them. Since the City has only the one (1) camera, this vendor could bring the feed into their system and put it on the SCDOT 511 website; the cost would be a one-time charge of seventeen hundred dollars (\$1,700). Chief Buckhannon stated that the Connector camera feed could be broadcast on not only the City's website but also on an app.

Ms. Rice asked where the camera was located and what would be the view. Chief Buckhannon responded that the camera is in the middle of the light at 14th Avenue facing the Connector, so people could see the traffic coming onto and leaving the island.

According to the Administrator, if the City finds this application to be successful, it could lead to an expansion of the camera system showing Palm Boulevard, for example. Administrator Tucker commented that she and the Mayor have a meeting scheduled with Sullivan's Island later in the week; they are interested in having a camera on the Ben Sawyer Bridge to serve the same purpose for them.

Answering Vice Chair Nelson's question, Chief Buckhannon stated that Mount Pleasant does not operate a camera system and that SCDOT is not ready to expand their system.

Administrator Tucker reported that she has already reached out to Mount Pleasant and Charleston County, explaining that this is a need from which the City could benefit, having cameras at the intersections at Rifle Range Road and the Connector and at Highway 17 and the Connector. Since the City is not of the opinion that SCDOT will do more, the tasks fall to Mount Pleasant and the County to take on the expense of acquiring the camera and the expense of making it a part of the system.

Ms. Haynie asked whether the seventeen hundred dollars (\$1,700) was for the start-up or a monthly fee; the Chief replied that it was a one-time expense.

MOTION: Ms. Miller moved for ATAX funds to be used for the one-time charge of \$1,700 for public access to the City's Connector camera; Ms. Haynie seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Application from the Carolina Coast Surf Club for \$1,000 for advertising and promotion of tourism through their surf-cam

Jim Radley, 5801 Hartnett Boulevard, distributed a handout that shows the surf club's surf-cam page and the vacant advertising spot that could be linked to the City's website for one thousand dollars (\$1,000). (The handout is attached to the historical record of the meeting.) Mr. Radley

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reported that the number of people who look at this page ranges from a high of fifty-three hundred (5,300) on July 4th, 2014 to about three hundred fifty (350) in mid-December 2014. If the ATAX Committee supports this advertising, the club plans to use part of the money to have streaming video; currently the picture updates every two to four (2-4) seconds.

Vice Chair Nelson asked if the website was funded by advertisers now; to which Mr. Radley responded that it was. The camera is located on the outside of the management offices of the Sea Cabins.

Mr. Radley said the possibility exists that the surf club could return next year with another request for support.

Ms. Rice asked whether the majority of members reside on the Isle of Palms, and Mr. Radley replied that the majority live in Mount Pleasant.

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to approve \$1,000 of ATAX funds for advertising on the Carolina Coast Surf Club's surf-cam page; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: Noon, Wednesday, October 7th in Council Chambers

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Burgis moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:48 p.m.; Ms. Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk