

Special City Council Meeting
5:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 6, 2015

A Special Emergency Meeting of City Council was called to order at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 6, 2015 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Bettelli, Buckhannon, Carroll, Ferencz, Harrington, Loftus and Ward, Mayor Cronin and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Mayor Cronin called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Purpose

A. Status of Emergency Conditions

Administrator Tucker stated that the City continues to function under OpCon 1, the highest level of alert, as is Charleston County. The Administrator noted that Charleston County and the National Weather Service were “right on point” in their predictions of what was going to happen and when it would happen. This storm has been dubbed the thousand year flood, and, as thousand year floods go, the City fared rather well and certainly better than some other areas of the state. The Administrator indicated that she did not know what the driver was for the heightened level, but she did note that many roads in the County continue to be closed to traffic due to the flooding. Council was told that the City was very close to opening all of its roads.

At this time, the Administrator complimented City Council for their support, guidance and quick response, as well as talking to the residents through this emergency; the Administrator cautioned Council that the recovery task was just beginning. This recovery will be different from what the City experienced post Hugo, but also similar in many ways. The citizens of the island have been most cooperative; they have listened to the policy setting body and to public safety personnel and reacted accordingly. Employees have shown up without being called in; the Administrator stated that “it has been very uplifting to work with people who come in and put in that kind of time and there is never any thought given to inconvenience or lack of sleep or any of those things. They just get here and do what needs to be done.” Administrator Tucker reported that she does not know of any other local government that reaches out to its special needs residents as the City has done in recent days.

According to the Administrator, the documents presented for this meeting do not require any action on the part of Council; there is a draft timeline of everything that happened since the event began. The pages entitled “Supplement to Local Initial Damage Assessment – Public Assistance” becomes relevant as the City moves into recovery mode. In order to complete these documents, the City will need assistance from its residents; the City and FEMA need to know about all of the damage on the island. If there are neighbors or friends who have sustained damage, please urge them to call Director Kerr at 843/886-9912 or at Dkerr@iop.net. The City has the responsibility of filling out all of the forms with the addresses of everything that sustained damage, whether it is insured damage or not; some damage is evident from riding around the island, but much is not visible from the street.

Councilmember Carroll suggested that the City use its Facebook page to disseminate this information to residents of the island.

The Administrator replied that the City will take the information in any form – email, fax, phone, or face-to-face.

Councilmember Loftus asked how the City planned to communicate with the second home owners and rental property owners, and Director Kerr said he would get the information to the rental management companies to relay to their customers.

Administrator Tucker stated that the request for information on damages would be posted to the City's website, Facebook and Twitter; she noted that the news media has also been helpful.

Other community items that need to be known are that the first federal emergency declaration was for emergency services, i.e. afforded the state resources from the federal government, i.e. federal military resources or specialty trained people. The declaration earlier today was an approval for FEMA Categories A and B, emergency protective measures and debris management respectively. State does not yet have the declaration for all of the categories, and the large sheets are set up for all Categories A-G; the other categories are as follows:

Category C	roads, bridges, signs
Category D	water control facilities
Category E	buildings and equipment
Category F	public utilities
Category G	parks, recreation and other

The goal is to get declarations for all categories; the category with the largest expense the City will have falls into G and is the beach erosion.

Two (2) additional factors to know when conveying information to citizens are that (1) the time is now to go to FEMA's website (FEMA.gov) to file for assistance; filing is very easy, but upon entering their address, the message will appear that there is not disaster declaration for that address. The Administrator encourages residents to keep on reading and realize that they are now in the queue, which means that the resident can go to the next step that there are tax benefits from the government. If the resident is not approved for aid, he will have a greater ability to make changes to tax information; it notes that some might be immediate in terms of amending existing returns, and it gives extensions of deadlines. Councilmember Ward stated that returns to be filed on October 14th now have until February 16, 2016 to file. This information will also be posted on the City's website.

The process is one (1) where the City will turn in its information to the County who add it to their data to get an aggregate for Charleston County; that data goes to the Emergency Preparedness Department of the state to, then, go the federal government.

Mayor Cronin stated that he understood that the County had to reach certain thresholds in the expenses to be incurred which is the reason behind the urgency from Charleston County.

Through this experience, the City has seen areas of the island that have drainage issues that were unknown previously; according to the Administrator, the time has come to figure out what costs would be incurred to make the drainage system on the island adequate. In addition, damage

that has been done to the City's roads as a result to the water on the roads and the degradation to the roads that served as detours around the flooded streets need to be added to the list once a figure has been determined for the road restoration. Since the City does not have a civil engineer on staff, it is at the mercy of the County to provide that assistance; there may come a time when the City should consider bringing in an engineering consultant to look at the City's overall system and determine what is needed where. The City would pursue reimbursement for that expense. Administrator Tucker added that those expenses could be considered hazard mitigation projects, reimbursed at fifty percent (50%), as opposed to straight FEMA projects.

Councilmember Carroll stated that this was his first occasion to see the City's emergency operation center activated and he was very impressed with what he saw.

The Administrator accepted his praise for all who were involved and acknowledged that mistakes were made, for instance, not removing the recycling and garbage cans from the beach and securing them in another location. Some were lost and there was likely some spillage into the ocean. In addition, the City needs to update its operating conditions per department; they were found to be outdated. The activities will be addressed in the City's after-action report.

The City faces a lot of work in the recovery to try to recuperate the expenses it has had and to get some financial assistance to be better.

Before proceeding with the *Agenda*, Mayor Cronin also complimented the staff for being on station all hours of the day. Everyone worked tirelessly, drove through water, spent nights away from home, etc.; some fire personnel stated that they had lost count after working sixty (60) hours – putting in the time necessary. Not only were they here on the island assisting the City and its residents, but they were away from their homes with the knowledge that their families were secure. The Mayor stated that he was very proud of the entire team.

B. Award of a contract to Coastal Science and Engineering in the amount of \$19,000 for emergency, post-storm erosion assessment

Administrator Tucker explained that one (1) key reason the City has continued to contract for regular beach monitoring of the entire island is that the City has been advised that, on the occasion of a storm event, it would need before and after documentation of the impact on the beach to get any assistance for recovering the beach. The surveys that have been done over the years will serve as the basis for determining the effect of this particular storm.

The Administrator further explained that two (2) ways exist to get assistance for the beach in these circumstances, and they are as follows:

1. Direct federal assistance where the Corps of Engineers handles the project, like the City of Folly Beach, and
2. Restoration of the local beach where the local government contracts for the restoration of the beach.

In informal conversations with the County, their plan was to use flyover pictures taken in January to compare them with flyover pictures taken now after the storm event. Advisors who

have worked with FEMA for many years have advised that this would not be as technical as would be required;

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therefore, the Administrator is concerned that a comparison as proposed would not be sufficient supporting information to forward to FEMA.

Subsequently, the Administrator reached out to Coastal Science and Engineering (CSE) to learn if they were in a position to do the work since their office was flooded and without power, personnel were scattered. Key factors were how quickly CSE could organize to be here, what the cost would be and how quickly the City could expect a work product. Although they could not produce a proposal, they did succeed in compiling a figure of nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000). If a disaster declaration is successful, the City would file for reimbursement of these expenses, but there would be no guarantee the City would get any money back. Administrator Tucker opined that "having the survey done would afford [the City] with the best opportunity to get reimbursement. "

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to award a contract to Coastal Science and Engineering in the amount of \$19,000 for emergency, post-storm erosion assessment; Councilmember Bettelli seconded.

Mayor Cronin commented that CSE thought they might be on the island as early as the end of this week or the first of next week; he also noted that this survey would not include the inlets.

The Mayor recommended accumulating the storm-related expenses in the Disaster Recovery Fund, and, whatever the City is reimbursed, could repay that fund.

Councilmember Ward stated that, after Hugo, the Corps of Engineers had come to the island to restore the beach and for debris removal; he asked what had changed in twenty years (20 yrs.). Administrator Tucker assured the Councilmember that she would inquire.

Responding to Councilmember Carroll, the Administrator stated that the last beach monitoring by CSE had been in September.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker introduced Bill Jenkins of the IOP Water and Sewer Commission to update Council on what happened at 41st Avenue and what the citizens can expect for the future.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he is the Special Projects Administrator for the Water and Sewer Commission. He reported that there had been a problem at the Forest Trails facility at about 3:30 a.m. on Sunday and noted that "no sewer system is confined" and is not designed to be completely flood tight. The system does get infiltration and inflow from rain on the manhole covers and broken pipes that cannot be seen because they are below grade. Mr. Jenkins stated that some changes were made at the plant to accommodate the amount of rain anticipated; the plant has an "in que," or holding, basin for the waste water as it comes into the facility with a capacity of three hundred thousand gallons (300,000 gal.). This basin breached and continued to breach for most of the day; due to the breach, the waste water treatment process could not keep up with the amount of water going into the process for treatment. A spill

from the plant occurred before the process could be tweaked. Adjustments were made in the process and the plant again began to produce clean water. As stated earlier, the facility is designed for three hundred fifty thousand

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gallons (350,000 gal.) treatment, but it was pushing out seven hundred sixty-three thousand gallons (763,000) of treated water; the design capacity is six hundred twenty-three thousand gallons (623,000 gal.). Personnel basically contained the breach, and as it was spilling over, it was run back into the system by drains nearby. The Forest Trails facility is now running normally, but still treating a lot of rainwater. Mr. Jenkins also stated that the plant in Wild Dunes experienced no difficulty as a result of the rain /flood event.

Mayor Cronin asked what citizens should do since there has been a discharge.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the Water and Sewer Commission was required by DHEC to post notification to them and to the public whenever there is a spillage over a certain volume of gallons; this breach met that criteria with a combined overflow of approximately ninety-thousand gallons (90,000 gal.). DHEC directed the Commission to generate a public notice to post along the outfall line through the 41st Avenue ditch to try to encourage people to stay out of the stormwater, not knowing what was in it.

The Mayor then asked how long the concern would last.

Due to the rainfall amount and the amount of water that was already on the ground, DHEC thought the dilution factor was acceptable, and they hoped the water would proceed out with the tide. The Commission was told that the notices could come down today.

In any future events, the Mayor suggested that a notification also state that drinking water has not been affected.

The subject shifted to septic tanks, and Mr. Jenkins informed Council that only about one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the homes on the island are on the sewer system with the balance on septic systems. He explained that, in this kind of flooding, septic systems will perk up; therefore, the island has a lot of contamination from them.

Councilmember Ferencz asked what agency was responsible for inspecting septic systems; she was told that the responsibility falls on the homeowner.

Administrator Tucker explained that each septic system has been permitted by DHEC, but the City was aware of several residences where the septic systems are not functioning at this time. Some of those problems are concentrated in one (1) area, and discussions at staff level included the City's possibility to place port-a-lets on the street for a brief period of time. The Recreation Center has served used as sanctuary in the areas of the island that can easily get there to use their facilities.

The Administrator stated that she was continuing to monitor the Charleston County EOC to determine whether the City can alter its emergency status; Chief Buckhannon reported that the County ECO has gone to OpCon 3.

The Chief also reported that a portion of Palm Boulevard was still flooded as were some of the avenues.

When Councilmember Bergwerf asked about reimbursement for tree removal, the Administrator replied that the City has not experienced any loss of trees, but personnel have assisted with the removal of three (3) trees.

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Mayor Cronin reported that the island received twenty-two point seventy-one inches (22.71 in.) of rain from this storm event; nine point sixty-five inches (9.65 in.) fell on Sunday alone.

3. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk