

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m., Thursday, August 4, 2016

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, August 4, 2016 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina, Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Captain Usry, Assistant Administrator Fragoso, and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bettelli 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 Carroll moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 14, 2016 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizen's Comments

Jim Raih, 3904 Cameron Boulevard, stated that property owners should have their properties surveyed since the City is striving to get encroachments out of the rights-of-way on the island. Since surveys are no longer necessary in the buying process, many property owners may have encroachments of some type into a neighbor's yard that they are totally unaware of.

Elizabeth Campsen, 3205 Intracoastal Court, addressed the Committee about the trailer parking along Waterway and 41st Avenue; she asked that Council review the ordinance that prohibits parking anything over twenty feet (20 ft.) on any rights-of-way. She stated that she has reviewed years' worth of Council, Public Safety and Real Property Committee minutes, and this has been a continuous discussion. She asked that the City study ways in which the existing ordinance could be enforced.

Ms. Campsen reported having called the City's Police Department on the day of the Dallas police shootings to say thank you for what the island's officers do every day, and she expressed hope that other residents of the island feel the same way toward all public safety personnel.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of Encroachments in the Rights-of-way

Councilmember Carroll confirmed that people no longer get as-built surveys when a property changes hands, but, with the new flood insurance, property owners are required to have a current elevation certificate that would show any encroachments in the right-of-way.

Chair Bettelli commented that residents need to be educated to call the Police Department when they see something being installed that could be an encroachment.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked whether the City was going to get an assessment of the encroachments by the degree of threat they pose to public safety.

Captain Usry confirmed that officers are in the process of assessing the island's encroachments with an eye toward new encroachments. She reported that in recent weeks as many as five (5) new encroachments have occurred, and the Livability Officer has sent letters to them noticing that they must go through the proper procedures with SCDOT to get an approval for the encroachment or remove it.

B. Updates Related to Coyotes

Captain Usry announced that four (4) coyote sightings were reported in the month of July; she noted that the Police Department is getting fewer calls despite various postings on Facebook that are not being reported.

C. Discussion of Parking Kiosks in City-owned Parking Lots

Based on her frequent visits to City Hall, she indicated that she would like for Amy, Clerk of Court, to have some assistance next summer.

Administrator Tucker stated that the City is no longer staffing the lots on the weekends and that an article about the City's parking will in *The Post and Courier* over the weekend. The subject primarily is the tickets being placed incorrectly or placed correctly, but, when the car door is closed, the ticket blows off the dashboard. She reported that the newspaper has copies of the documentation sent in response to the FOIA request.

There were a few problems related to free parking in the lots by residents who are properly credentialed; because the City got some based information about Wild Dunes' stickers, some people got tickets who should not have – these tickets were reduced to warnings.

Councilmember Carroll reported having received an email from Joe Petro, owner of the Banana Cabana, who stated that his business has definitely picked up, and he thanked the City for its response to his problem.

D. Update on 41st Avenue Enforcement

Captain Usry stated that the Police Department has assisted Mr. Bell with some selective traffic enforcement on 41st Avenue; the results were a confirmation of speeders in both directions on the street. She has again deployed the radar speed sign until August 24th; in addition, the City Administrator has researched speed signs, and the Police Department has worked with Custom Signals that also provides the ability for the City to place a speed limit sign that will show drivers their speed versus the speed limit on the street. The Captain also stated that some of the items from Custom Signs will be on state contract, and she anticipates the cost for one (1) sign to be approximately thirty-two hundred dollars (\$3,200). The sign could be either portable or stationary, and there is a slight increase in price to go solar versus electric.

Councilmember Carroll asked about the effectiveness of speed bumps; the Captain answered that speed bumps can be very harmful to fire apparatus and emergency vehicles.

Administrator Tucker stated that she thought 41st Avenue was a great application of this product since it can be attached to the speed limit sign, drawing attention to their speed versus the limit for that street or road. The Administrator opined that people do not notice the speed limit signs; they see that they have a straight way into the marina. She cautioned the Committee that this was not budgeted and would be an out-of-budget expenditure; the recommendation for Ways and Means would be for an unbudgeted expense of up to three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for a speed sign on 41st Avenue. Since the speeders are traveling in both directions, the City should purchase two (2) speed signs.

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to purchase 2 solar speed signs up to and not to exceed \$6,000; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

A. Consideration of a contract award to L32 Mobile Vision for body cameras at a cost of \$18,314.50 (Pg. 25, Hospitality Tax, line 182 – Police Department Non-capital Tools & Equipment, \$17,000 and pg. 10, General Fund, Police Department, line 82 – Non-capital Tools & Equipment, \$800)

Chair Bettelli stated that seventeen thousand eight hundred dollars (\$17,800) was in the budget for body cameras for Police officers; the bid has come in approximately five hundred dollars (\$500) over budget.

Captain Usry stated that on July 19th, the Police Department received a letter from the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, stating that the City was awarded a grant for body cameras in the amount of nine thousand six hundred dollars (\$9,600).

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to award a contract for L32 Mobile Vision for body cameras at a cost of \$18,314.50; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Award of a contract award to Vic Bailey Ford for 1 – 2017 Ford Interceptor SUV (unmarked) at a cost of \$27,341 (Pg. 23 – Municipal Accommodations Fee Fund, line 112 – Police Capital Outlay, \$32,000)

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to award a contract to Vic Bailey as detailed above in the amount of \$27,341; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Consideration of a contract award to Benson Ford for 1 Ford 2017 Police Interceptor Sedan at a cost of \$24,467 (Pg. 26, State ATAX – Police Department, In. 275 – Police Capital Outlay, \$38,250)

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to award a contract to Benson Ford for 1 Ford 2017 Police Interceptor sedan at \$24,467; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Consideration of a contract award to Jones Ford for 1 – 2016 Ford F150 4x4 Super Crew Cab truck at a cost of \$31,375.17 (Pg. 27, State ATAX – Fire Department, ln. 283 – Fire Capital Outlay, \$32,000)

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to award a contract to Jones Ford as detailed above; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.

Chief Graham reported that this truck will replace the 2010 Battalion Chief's truck; that truck will become a part of the fleet as a vehicle for training/inspection.

E. Request from Smithsonian video-on-demand, Smithsonian Earth, for City-sponsored event status to allow them to film a rehabilitated turtle release back to the ocean

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to allow Smithsonian Earth City-sponsored event status as stated above; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. Discussion of STOP sign at Intersection of 25th Avenue and Waterway Boulevard

Chair Bettelli said that there have been problems at this intersection in the past.

Captain Usry reported that the problem this time is with cyclists who want to remove the STOP sign; the Captain reported that the Department gets complaints of cyclists not stopping at STOP signs from all over the island. If this is something that the City would like to do, it can make a request of SCDOT to consider the removal of the sign.

Chief Buckhannon told the Captain that this particular STOP sign has been here as long as he has been associated with the City in the 1980s.

Councilmember Carroll voiced his opinion that keeping the sign on Waterway is "imperative." Waterway has been getting more and more traffic as residents try to avoid Palm Boulevard.

In the Chair's opinion, in addition to the public safety factor, he viewed the STOP sign as a traffic calming device.

Chair Bettelli stated that the Committee took no action to remove the sign.

G. Review Contractor Parking Guidelines

This is on the Agenda as a result of emails the City has received from residents of the island.

According to Captain Usry, when a contractor goes to the Building Permit to get the necessary permits, he is also issued up to four (4) special parking permits that allow the subcontracts to park in the easement in front of the residence under construction. The complaint came from 44th

Avenue where there are two (2) residences being built on the same side at the end of the street; one (1) issue the Police Department was asked to look into was workers parking in residents' driveways. The police cannot enforce anything on private property, so it is up to the homeowner to ask the driver to leave or have the vehicle towed.

H. Discussion of Safety Concerns related to Bike Path South of the Connector

Chair Bettelli recounted that the City had made a TST request for several years running for a bike path from Breach Inlet to 57th Avenue. He agreed that currently the island is not safe for cyclists and that he does not know whether the rights-of-way are wide enough to accommodate regulation bike paths from one end of the island to the other.

The Administrator confirmed that the City has been pressing for regulation bike paths on both sides of Palm Boulevard for the island; she noted that cyclists exiting the Connector and heading south are first greeted by a pothole on Palm. The entire stretch of road is deteriorating in places, and the debris from the deterioration is ending up on the one (1) bike lane that exists. The Administrator acknowledged that this stretch of road needs attention and it would be better if bike lanes were on both sides. That is the advocacy stated in the Public Works Committee meeting. The advocacy from the Public Works meeting was that something needs to be done to maintain what is there now, whether the TST request is ever acted upon or not.

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that this was brought to SCDOT's attention after Joaquin; she commented that she had reached out to SCDOT after the Public Works meeting, asking if there was any update and they have not responded.

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to make a bicycle path from the end of the Connector and around the corner heading south on Palm Boulevard to make it safer; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

On June 3rd, personnel responded to a call of a boat on fire in the ocean; upon investigation, the crew determined that the smoke was diesel exhaust from a boat's engine. Two (2) swimmers were reported to be caught in a rip current around the 4100 block of Palm on June 7th; the four (4) subjects were returned to shore unharmed. Also on June 7th crews responded to a canoe that had capsized in the ocean; when crews arrived, three (3) individuals were hanging onto the boat and two (2) others were back in the canoe. All of the individuals were returned to shore unharmed; the canoe was also retrieved by Fire Department personnel. Responding to a report of a structure fire on Seagrass Lane, personnel found that the hydraulic pump that operates the elevator was the source of the smoke. On June 17th in a thunderstorm, personnel responded to a call of an overturned boat with people in the water in the Intracoastal Waterway; after finding the original caller, the crew found the boat stranded in the marsh. The boat was secured with an anchor, and the five (5) passengers were transported back to the IOP Marina. Fire personnel responded to one hundred fifty-three (153) calls in June, the highest number in thirteen (13) years, and forty-

seven (47) of the calls were for EMS. Sixteen (16) pre-incident surveys were conducted in the month. Directing attention to page 25 of the June report, Chief Graham stated that the Fire Department exceeded its Vehicle Maintenance budget significantly; Tower 1002, the ninety-five (95) foot ladder truck required new brakes prior to the end of the year for approximately thirty-eight hundred dollars (\$3,800). In addition, truck 1001, the newest of the pumpers needed to have the diesel particulate filter sensor cleaned at just under one thousand dollars (\$1,000). In June, many station tours were conducted, and firefighters conducted demonstrations of the jet-ski and water rescue for visitors on Front Beach and at the Recreation Center.

On July 2nd, personnel responded to a boat that had run aground in the Intracoastal Waterway; passengers of the twenty-one foot (21 ft.) boat were transferred to the Fire Department boat and took them to the IOP Marina. On July 7th, personnel responded to a call of people stuck inside an elevator; upon arrival, the crew secured the power, and assisted the individuals out of the elevator. Property management was advised to have the elevator serviced before allowing it to be used again. The total number of calls for the month was one hundred eighty-nine (189), and seventy-five (75) calls were for EMS. Seven (7) pre-incident surveys were done, and seven (7) fire inspections were conducted. This year has started as last year ended with large vehicle maintenance costs; Engine 1002, a 2003 model, required replacement of the coolant hose, engine 1001, the newest truck, needed to have the diesel particulate filter cleaned, and Ladder 1001 had to have eleven (11) ball valves rebuilt in the fire pump and the replacement of the transducer for the pressure governor. Again firefighters conducted many station tours and assisted with the IOP Beach Run.

Police Department – Captain Usry

On June 4th, officers located a suspicious vehicle in Wild Dunes and, in the course of a traffic stop, an officer observed an ammunition magazine in the open console, located a loaded handgun under the front passenger seat and a rifle sticking through the trunk into the back seat. Additionally, the officers found several electronic items, women's purses and other items; a local agency confirmed that they had had several break-ins; the subjects were arrested and taken to the AI Cannon Detention Center. The island experienced six (6) thefts from a motor vehicle in the month of June; people are leaving their keys and other valuables on the beach with no one to keep an eye on them. They are being stolen and then taken to the street or parking lot to see which vehicle reacts to the electronic signals. The Department did a piece with Channel 4 on the "Beach Bag Bandits." Ten (10) people were issued citations for alcohol on the beach in June. Officer Chris Enourato was recognized for his professionalism for his assisting residents with a recurring raccoon problem. Pfc. Storen was recognized for receiving the silver pin for the 2015 DUI Enforcement Hero Award for the thirty-four (34) DUI arrests he made in 2015. Officer Shena Crockett was recognized by a citizen for her professionalism and politeness during the performance of her duties. Communication Specialist Jane Stewart was recognized as a dedicated employee who is always eager to take on new tasks; she can be depended upon to complete any project she is assigned. During the month, dispatchers responded to five thousand seven hundred forty-five calls (5,745); forty-six hundred one (4,601) were for the Police Department. Three hundred five (305) traffic stops were made in the month, and eighty-eight (88) citations were issued. For the month of June, twenty (20) citations were issued in the Animal Control Report and year-to-date the total is sixty-four (64). Fourteen (14) noise complaints were

filed in June; one (1) citation was written and nine (9) warnings; the balance were deemed to be unfounded.

On Tuesday, July 12th, a resident reported having received a bill that appeared to be from an electric company stating that, if the bill was not paid by a certain date, the power to his residence would be shut down; the resident also received a phone call giving him instructions to send a money gram. After following the instructions and paying the bill, the victim contacted the power company only to learn that this was not their normal business practice; the case has been turned to CID for investigation. On the same day, a victim reported that he had left his beach bag unattended, and it was stolen along with his car keys; the approximate value of the stolen items was almost two hundred dollars (\$200). On July 19th, officers reported to the scene of a low speed vehicle striking the residence and the occupants fleeing; damage to the house was about one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and the value of the stolen LSV is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). A victim reported that unknown persons had entered an unsecured residence by making a hole in the wall through the garage area; they stole multiple televisions and other electronic equipment valued at twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,000). In July officers wrote seventeen (17) citations for alcohol on the beach. Pfc. Storen was promoted to the rank of sergeant effective July 1. The total number of calls in July was six thousand four hundred eighty-eight (6,488), and five thousand two hundred seventy-nine (5,279) were for the Police Department, representing an eighteen percent (18%) increase for the same period in 2015. Two hundred eighty-eight (288) traffic stops were made in July with fifty-four (54) of the drivers getting citations. Fourteen (14) citations were issued for dog license or dog at large violations. For July, six (6) noise complaints were called in, but not citations were issued; four (4) calls received warnings and two (2) were unfounded.

In light of the recent attacks on Police officers, Captain Usry stated that the residents of the Isle of Palms have brought in food, snacks, and cards; generally, the officers are being shown a great deal of support from the community.

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Monday, September 12th in the City Hall Conference Room

Chair Bettelli thanked the public safety personnel and members of the Recreation Department for their fine work on the July 4th fireworks; he said that he has gotten several emails stating how wonderful the fireworks display was this year. He also stated that the national Night Out was a great celebration at the Rec Center that drew a great crowd.

Administrator Tucker thought the food and the helicopter were “really good” additions this year. She was grateful to the businesses who donated food for the event.

Councilmember Bergwerf complimented Chief Graham on the “fabulous” fireworks display on July 4th. As the fireworks were beginning, members of the Turtle Team were notified that a turtle had come ashore to lay her nest, but the Police took care of the crowd, the people were great, some held up big blankets so the turtle would not be distracted by the fireworks.

8. Executive Session – unnecessary

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 a.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Copeland
City Clerk