

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 13, 2009

The regular meeting of the Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 13, 2009 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Buckhannon, members Bettelli and Loftus, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Chairman Buckhannon called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and the public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Councilman Bettelli nominated Chairman Buckhannon as Chairman for the coming year; Councilman Loftus seconded the nomination, and there were no others. Following a unanimous vote, the Committee elected Chairman Buckhannon to retain his position.

Councilman Loftus nominated Councilman Bettelli as Vice Chair; Chairman Buckhannon seconded; and there were no other nominations. Councilman Bettelli was elected Vice Chair following a unanimous vote.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Vice Chair Bettelli moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 11, 2008; Councilman Loftus seconded.

Vice Chair Bettelli indicated that there was an error in the November meeting minutes in the motion at the top of Page 5; motion was made by Chairman Buckhannon and seconded by Councilman Bettelli.

The amended minutes were UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Chris Donovan, 2403 Waterway, spoke to the Committee regarding the impact of the barricade placed at the end of 25th Avenue to her property; she offered photographs of the vehicles parking in her yard and asked the Committee to find another resolution to the original complaints on 25th Avenue. Ms. Donovan stated that she has no problems with those who parked for reasonable periods to fish or to launch kayaks, but the problem arose with vehicles that were left overnight or longer. Councilman Loftus suggested that parking be allowed with time restrictions imposed, but Chief Buckhannon explained that DOT had informed him that they do not have a mechanism to deal with

time limited parking. When asked to define the City's options, Chief Buckhannon stated the choices were to allow parking or to block off the street. Administrator Tucker added that, to block off the street, DOT would require that the City assume full responsibility for the street thereby removing it from the DOT system. The issues that caused the City to decide on the barricade were complaints from residents at the end of the street, where it runs into the Intracoastal Waterway were 1) a resident had placed a berm at the end of the street to prohibit parking on his property; 2) residents of Goat Island were tying up their boats there to avoid fees at the marina; and 3) there were trespassers onto the property of residents at the Intracoastal end of the street. After further discussion, the Committee decided to refer the issue to the City Attorney for an opinion as to possibilities the City might pursue.

Before proceeding with Old Business, Administrator Tucker took a moment to display the picture and plaque recognizing the Silver Award presented to the City for Fire Station 2 by "Fire Chief" magazine.

5. Old Business

A. Status of Public Safety Building

Administrator Tucker stated that she wanted to share with the Committee the pictorial progress being made in the construction of the building with the inclusion of the Field Report and Photo Log from the last two (2) progress meetings.

- 1. Change Order #6 – Furnish and Install wire mesh partition and gate to evidence area in garage at a cost of \$5,156.00 and Add data/telephone and power receptacle to Dispatch at a cost of \$759.61; Change Order #6 total equals \$5,915.61.**

The Administrator noted that this was the first change order initiated by the City. The wire mesh partition on the change order refers to a chained off area on the first floor in the garage of the Police Department for the storage of evidence. And the data/telephone and power receptacle in the Dispatch area would accommodate an additional person when there was the need, for example, emergency weather conditions.

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to recommend the approval of Change Order #6 totalling \$5,915.61 to the Ways and Means Committee; Councilman Loftus seconded.

On the subject of the additional station in the Dispatch area, Chief Buckhannon explained that there was the need for assistance in Dispatch when there were special

events on the island like the July 4th fireworks, when there were extraordinary events occurring and, at times, for the supervisor to view how the work was going. There is not a third station in the present Dispatch area because there simply is not enough space to accommodate one.

Chairman Buckhannon asked what would be stored in the chained enclosure; Chief Buckhannon explained that it would be used to house evidence that was obtained after normal business hours. Only certain police employees have access to the permanent evidence cache, so this space would serve as temporary storage until the evidence was moved to the permanent storage. This evidence storage space will eliminate questions about the chain of evidence that may be a deciding factor in certain cases. The Chief informed the Committee that the space will be approximately 6 feet by 9 feet with the chain link fencing on one (1) side going from floor to ceiling with a door and locks. He added that, without the storage area, one of the detectives must be called back into the office to access permanent storage.

The Committee members were in agreement that the price for chain link fencing as quoted here was excessive; therefore, Administrator Tucker was asked to find out before the Ways and Means Committee meeting on Tuesday, January 20 if there was an alternate material and/or a lower price available that would serve the intended purpose.

MOTION: Councilman Loftus moved to amend the original motion to add that approval would be contingent upon a review of the pricing of the fencing; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Call for the Question: The original motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Adjustments within Budget Line Items

Administrator Tucker reported that she and both Chief Graham and Chief Buckhannon saw a need to move the alarm system and the hardware for the doors from the City's procurement into the Mashburn contract; this change would not change the overall project cost, but would move from one heading to another. The relocation of these expenses reduces the dollars under "Communication and Surveillance" and "Furniture, Equipment and Hardware" and increases the dollars under "Mashburn Construction Contract." She explained that the reasoning behind the request was that there has been concern, because the alarm system and the door hardware all have to intermix with the construction, that the City might procure something then have issues in coordinating between the City's contractor and Mashburn that would ultimately cost the City money. With the change, the building construction contractor would be assuming

the risk, yet there would be less chance for error. The Administrator noted that this reclass of funds would create change orders, but the change orders would not be altering the total of the Public Safety Building budget.

Chief Graham detailed the construction progress anticipated in the coming days. She reported that the construction is on schedule and the anticipated completion date is April 15, 2009.

On the subject of completing the Public Safety Building, Administrator Tucker stated that Cole+Russell had contacted her about the dedication plaque for the building. She noted that there had been one Mayor and seated City Council when the project started and another Mayor, likely, and seated Council upon building completion; the decision needed to be made to indicate one or the other Mayor and Council or both Mayors and seated Councils. Chairman Buckhannon and Councilman Bettelli agreed that the plaque should reflect the names of the Mayor and Council when the project began. Councilman Loftus did not state his opinion one way or the other, but he did ask what other municipalities did. Administrator Tucker said that the plaque is done both ways and that she was unaware of any exact protocol on the subject.

B. Update on SCDOT Demonstration Project at 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard

The Administrator commented that, if the project were to become permanent, signs had to be placed in such a manner as not to be blown over in strong winds, as happened recently. Councilman Loftus expressed his opinion that traffic was flowing smoothly through the intersection, that the residents of Wild Dunes were pleased with it and that he had stopped receiving comments. Councilman Loftus did state that more signage was needed on Palm informing drivers of what was ahead. Councilman Bettelli noted that the re-lining of the street still had not been done and that he would push DOT; Chief Buckhannon indicated that DOT was not responding to his requests.

Chairman Buckhannon stated that he would like to see the topic stay on the agenda at least until the island experiences a heavily trafficked period to truly test the project.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of Annual Project Submission for CTC Funding

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that this was a request that the City received every year and that the City had been very successful in receiving funds from

this source; the deadline for submissions is February 6, 2009. Projects that would be considered involve new projects, such as improvements to roads, intersections or

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pedestrian accesses; the Administrator reported that the City has received funds in the past for the 54th to 57th Avenue Drainage project, additional handicapped parking, the bike path on Waterway from 41st Avenue to Forest Trail, etc.

After a period of discussion, the Committee agreed on the following prioritized list:

1. the 54th to 57th Avenue Drainage project,
2. Lauden Lane drainage project;
3. 41st Avenue bike path and beautification;
4. 41st to 57th Avenue bike path; and
5. island parking study to be divided into three (3) zones..

B. Discussion of Draft Ordinance on Radio Communications within Commercial Buildings

The Administrator recalled that the City has learned, through its experience at The Villages, that, in large commercial buildings, there is the need for additional boosting to hear radio transmissions. To date, the responsibility to resolve the problem and the related expense has fallen to the City; with the adoption of an ordinance like the draft in the meeting packets, that responsibility and cost would be shifted to the owner(s) of the structure.

Chief Graham suggested that the required signal strength be between 700 and 900 megahertz and that the equipment has a quick disconnect.

In response to Councilman Loftus' question about the minimum size that the ordinance would apply to, Chief Graham responded that it was not size as much as the amount of concrete and rebar used in the construction.

Chief Graham also reported that the Fire Department personnel were having more communication problems in these structures with the digital radios than they had with the analog radios.

Councilman Loftus asked if the ordinance would also apply to the larger homes that have been built on the island; in response, he was told that the ordinance being discussed only applied to commercial buildings. But Chief Graham did relate that they have encountered communication problems in these larger homes. Administrator Tucker added that she had not seen anything in her research that addressed residential property.

MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to send the ordinance on radio communications in large buildings to City Council; Councilman Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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C. Report on Concerns about Digital Radio Transmissions

Administrator Tucker explained that the City, as well as other municipalities in the County, was experiencing inconsistent service from the 800 system; the City's problems appear to be worse than some due the City's location on the fringe. She listed the following issues as examples of the problems occurring:

- Distorted voices;
- Transmissions that blank out; and
- An underwater type of warbling sound.

Chief Graham reported that she has been maintaining a log of the problems thereby documenting every occurrence in order to get the problem solved. Chief Graham stated that the City has five (5) open cases with Motorola.

Since the City has invested a large sum of money into the radio system at the recommendation of Charleston County, Administrator Tucker stated that she was hopeful that Charleston County would partner with the City for the solution.

Chief Graham commented that she has been unsure of the type coverage on which the Fire Department could depend. In an attempt to resolve that problem, the County has agreed to put up a new site in Six Mile to cover a five to seven (5-7) mile radius; this site should be complete in sixty (60) days, but there are no guarantees that the problem will disappear. She noted that the repeater has been mounted on one of the trucks and that it is "working great;" she added that the Fire Department would seek to get another one in the coming budget year. Chief Buckhannon agreed that the problems were spotty and difficult to document. Chief Graham remarked that Project 25, which is what this radios are, was experiencing problems nationwide.

D. Award of Contracts in excess of \$10,000 – None

7. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham
Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

There were no questions from the Committee after the reports were given.

Councilman Loftus inquired when Chief Buckhannon would replace the Livability Officer; the Chief replied that he intended to fill the position from within the Police Department

and that he had deliberately delayed filling the position sooner to hold down costs in the department.

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Administrator Tucker commented that she had heard conversations within the community that the City did not need a dedicated officer to enforce livability issues; as a result of those conversations, she asked the Committee if she and Chief Buckhannon should anticipate continued support from City Council on a full-time Livability Officer. Chairman Buckhannon and Councilman Bettelli agreed that the livability concerns were best handled by one person who could deliver consistency to the residents, and they were anxious to have the position filled.

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that the ALS race had been scheduled for May 30, 2009 between the hours of 5 p.m. and 10 p.m.; she also reminded them that this event was on the City's list of annual approved events so no action was required.

Councilman Loftus inquired of Chief Buckhannon if there had been any repercussions from the fact that the no-smoking ordinance had gone into effect January 1, 2009. Chief Buckhannon responded that the City appeared to be adapting and that he had not heard any complaints from the local businesses.

Councilman Bettelli reported that he had received a citizen's complaint about an SUV that has been parked on 20th Avenue for quite some time; they wanted to know what could be done about it. Chief Buckhannon stated that, since the tags on the vehicle were no longer valid, according to state law, the owners would be notified that they have seven (7) days to move the vehicle; if they did not do so, the vehicle would be towed and auctioned. The Chief reported that the notification had been made.

Councilman Bettelli reminded the Committee that it was time for dog tags to be renewed and suggested that a reminder notice be placed in water and sewer billings and *The Island Eye*.

Next Meeting: 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at Fire Station 2, Training Room.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk

