

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
5:00 p.m., Thursday, April 2, 2009

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Buckhannon, Councilmen 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. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

**MOTION:** Councilman Bettelli moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 12, 2009 as submitted; Councilman Loftus seconded and the motion **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

3. **Citizens' Comments**

Bev Ballow, Mary Pringle and Barbara Bergwerf of the Isle of Palms Turtle Team were present for the meeting; Ms. Ballow expressed the Team's gratitude to the City Administrator, City Council and the Police and Public Works Departments for the plan they have put into place to enforce the Beach Debris Ordinance. She offered the assistance of the Turtle Team since they are on the beach at sunrise.

Chief Buckhannon was asked to explain the plan that has been devised to keep the beach free of debris that could impede or endanger people as they walk after dark and turtles as they come onto the beach to lay their eggs. He related that, at night, the patrol supervisors will ride the beach – at a time determined by the tides – looking for tents, chairs, coolers, etc. that were left on the beach. When they come upon such items, the supervisors will tag the item(s), with specially printed tags, indicating VIOLATION NOTICE and the number of the ordinance that was violated. When violations are issued, the supervisor will inform Public Works Director Pitts what the item is and its location on the beach; the following morning, Public Works will remove the item from the beach.

Ms. Ballow suggested that the Beach Patrol Officers inform island visitors who set up tents, for example, of the requirement to remove the tent daily and that the tent, if left overnight, will not be on the beach the following morning.

Chief Buckhannon assured Councilman Loftus that the rental agencies were well informed of the existence of the ordinance and know that they are responsible for informing their guests.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **A. Update on Public Safety Building**

Administrator Tucker reported that construction progress is proceeding as anticipated, and the Committee will again see contracts for items the City is responsible for to retrofit the building. At the last construction meeting, there were discussions relative to moisture problems and the timing, and the City and Mashburn are negotiating on some delays that they have experienced and want to add to the end of the contract. The new substantial completion date is June 5, and completion on June 13, 2009.

Councilman Loftus inquired of Chief Graham when the Fire Department planned to move into the new building, and she responded that the goal is before July 4, 2009.

The Administrator noted that the Committee members had the report and photos of the March 17 progress meeting.

Chief Buckhannon commented that he had been in contact with Michael Ball, the person responsible for the 911 system for Charleston County, a couple of times a week about getting the City's 911 system moved and set-up. He explained that one (1) issue that has come up is that the City will need three (3) network drops just for 911 in the dispatch center that he does not think are there now.

Chief Graham also said that there is the possibility of some type of change relative to the digital radio system; Charleston County is considering backup radios for Fire and Police Departments, so there may be accommodations needed.

##### **B. Update on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Chief Buckhannon reported that he had received a letter from Robert Clark of SCDOT allowing two (2) hour parking on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue beyond Waterway Boulevard, and SCDOT will provide the signage. In Mr. Clark's letter, there was also reference to the end of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue stating that SCDOT did not want to make any changes to the barricade it had installed a year or so ago. Due to the general state of the end of the road, SCDOT does not want to encourage its use by making it too easy to get around. Administrator Tucker asked Chief Buckhannon to inform Ms. Donovan of the results of her appeals to the Committee.

### **C. Review of Capital and Operating Budgets for FY 2009-2010**

Chairman Buckhannon recognized the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee Dee Taylor who was attending this meeting to respond to any concerns or questions that may arise about the budget for the new fiscal year.

Chairman Taylor thanked the member of the Committee for their work thus far on the budgets for FY 2009-2010 and reminded them of the budget work session planned for Wednesday, April 15.

Chairman Buckhannon stated that certain changes made at the last meeting were not reflected in the budget for the meeting packets, i.e. the stair chair, bunker gear for additional firefighters. Administrator Tucker assured the Committee that the corrections would be made prior to the workshop.

Councilman Loftus again asked if the thermal imaging camera could be delayed for a year in hopes of getting a grant to pay for one; Chief Graham stated that she was actively pursuing any grant that would help apply to the Fire Department, but there are few. The Chief repeated that the thermal imaging camera is an essential part of the safety equipment for the Department; Chairman Buckhannon suggested leaving the camera in the budget until all grant opportunities had been exhausted.

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that there were changes in the City's group health insurance – the two hundred dollar (\$200) deductible plan will no longer be offered and it is to be replaced with a three hundred fifty dollar (\$350) deductible plan. There will be cost savings with a lower premium for the City, but additional costs for employees.

The Administrator explained that she and the Treasurer were still in the process of balancing revenues to expenses, but the budget, as originally presented, was lean and there was little left to cut. She did indicate that there was the possibility that there would be no merit or COLA increases for employees as they were the only items that could be cut without effecting services.

Chief Buckhannon informed the Committee that he had the Department's golf cart/beach buggy checked out by a different mechanic who opined that the cart would survive another season; therefore, the purchase of a new one (1) in FY 2009-2010 could be moved to FY 2010-2011. Chief Graham reported the same results with the cart belonging to the Fire Department. The mechanic recommended that the two (2) carts receive monthly maintenance services.

## **5. New Business**

### **A. Discussion of Fire Department Mascot**

Administrator Tucker explained that, having seen Fire Department personnel become so enamored of one (1) of the rescued dogs at Doggie Day at the Rec, Councilwoman Rice had obtained the dog for Fire Station 2 to experiment with having a mascot and delivered it on Friday. The Administrator noted that the adult dog had been delivered with a kennel, food, etc. to make the transition an easy one. Both the Administrator and Chief Graham were caught off guard relative to the dog since normal channels had not been adhered to; that aside, the Department appears to be taking good care of the dog, and he appears to be integrating nicely. Chief Graham stated that the dog was very good-natured and appeared to be "at home" at Fire Station 2; she added that, if the dog is allowed to stay, the firemen have committed to his care.

A lengthy discussion followed addressing concerns about the cost of upkeep, the City's liability should the dog bite anyone, housing a pet in the new fire station and the likelihood that an employee could be allergic to the dog, as well as the fact that the City's normal procedures were not followed. In the end, the Committee was in agreement that the dog could not stay with the Fire Department, and Chief Graham was hopeful that one of the firefighters would agree to adopt him. Administrator Tucker stated that she would contact Councilwoman Rice to explain the Committee's concerns.

### **B. Review of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000**

1. Award of Contract for networking computer system
2. Award of Contract for telephone system
3. Award of Contract for telephone service

Chief Buckhannon was granted the Committee's permission to take these items in reverse order. Chief Buckhannon distributed the information of the vendors he had contacted and their quotes for the City's telephone service; he pointed out that Spirit has the state contract for this service. He explained that MPLS service will provide connectivity between buildings for network infrastructure; Chief Buckhannon noted that the importance of the City's considering it was that it would allow a central operation for the City's network equipment and phone equipment between facilities. As stated on the memo, the AT&T service does not include the cost of an additional T1 system to the Public Safety Building, and it is a necessary item that adds approximately six hundred twenty dollars (\$620) a month to the figure quoted; the Nuvox pricing includes the T1 line. He added that the quotes are for city-wide service, not just the Public Safety Building. Neither Administrator Tucker nor Chief Buckhannon thought the City should consider a system without the MPLS feature.

When asked by Councilman Loftus about the term of the contract, Chief Buckhannon stated that the contract would run for three (3) years. Since Spirit is a state contract vendor, if the City were to decide on day 2 of the three-year contract that the service is not what was marketed, the City can cancel the contract with no punitive damages due.

When asked for his preference, the Chief stated that he would be happy with any of the four (4) vendors, but that Nuvox is the lowest cost.

Chief Buckhannon explained that the primary reason he wanted to discuss the service first was that the service provider influences the telephone equipment despite the fact that the phones would be purchased from a different vendor. He noted that the Spirit phones were cheaper because they were a part of a hosted system. The actual phone proposals were on another handout that listed the five (5) vendors contacted; Administrator Tucker noted that the equipment purchase would be a one-time expense.

The Chief pointed out that Spirit and Shoretell were both one hundred percent (100%) IP telephony, i.e. they work through the "clouded" internet. There will be forty-eight (48) phones for the Public Safety Building.

When asked how many phones would be needed for City Hall, Chief Buckhannon stated that, if the City does elect the MPLS service, it would no longer need a phone system, just telephones. He identified the manufacturer of each vendor as follows:

Spirit	-	Avia	Fortran	-	Toshiba
Home	-	ESI	BDS	-	NEC
Shoretell	-	own line			

In addition to the telephones, the City would need to purchase a server if it were to select the Shoretell phones at an additional cost of four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500). The Chief commented that Home, Fortran and BDS are converged systems, i.e. a combination of digital and IP telephony; he expressed his leeringness of total IP service because he does not believe that the technology was where it needed to be. He concluded that, having researched all of these systems, he believed that there were more perks with the Home system, but he would be happy with either the Toshiba or Home with Nuvox service. The phones from Home would be two hundred ten dollars (\$210) each for the number of phones need in City Hall. Since the IP phones attached to computers, there would be no need for a phone system in City Hall, but there would likely be a need for some wiring.

**MOTION: Councilman Loftus moved to recommend to Ways and Means award of a contract to Nuvox in the amount of \$32,149.20 annually for city-wide telephone service and award of a contract to Home for the telephone system for the Public Safety Building in the amount of \$23,082.15; Chairman Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The final piece to be discussed was for the networking services at the Public Safety Building, and the vendors contacted and the process followed was on a third memo. Two (2) of the vendors have "No response" beside them; Chief Buckhannon explained that Intel is changing their product line, and companies closely tied to Intel were having issues in getting certain costs. Technology Solutions, the low bidder, was the primary vendor for the Town of Mount Pleasant where they dealt with an MPLS systems and tied in fifteen (15) offices into one (1) unified network system. The vendor selected would provide a block of one hundred (100) hours, use approximately sixty (60) hours to set up the domain architecture with active directory setup and balance for workstation setup.

He stated that, if the City does go with the Nuvox service and Home telephones, Technology Solutions would actually set up a network for the three facilities – Public Safety Building, City Hall and Fire Station 2. All of the systems would be integrated into one as part of the integration between City Hall and Public Works; only the Recreation Department is not part of the system.

**MOTION: Councilman Loftus moved to recommend to Ways and Means the award of a contract to Technology Solutions to provide the networking services for \$22,263.03 for the Public Safety Building; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **6. Highlights of Department Reports for March 2009**

With the meeting occurring so early in the month, neither the Fire nor Police Departments had written reports prepared.

Chief Graham reported that on March 25 there had been a fuel spill at Morgan Creek, and the source was not found. Volunteer Firefighter Ed Henry completed the course work to be an instructor. On the subject of vehicle maintenance, the Chief reported that Engine 2, damaged in October, had been repaired in Mount Pleasant at a fraction of the cost when the equipment is taken to Ridgeville. The firemen also assisted with cleaning the handicapped access at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Updating the Committee on the radio situation, Chief Graham reported that Motorola personnel had been in town and, in their terminology, had optimized the system; as a

result, the system is operating as it was designed to operate. She stated that Walt Smalls, who was with Charleston County and had attended the February City Council meeting, was now heavily involved in the radio issue and to make sure that everything stays on track with the County by accepting input from the users throughout the County. The Chief reported that she had learned, after a meeting of the East Cooper Fire Chiefs, that issues the County was to take care of and they had not. She reported that she also learned that the Six Mile tower was operational the previous Friday for a test, and the users in this area did not see any improvement in their communications. There have been Motorola personnel on the Isle of Palms that have replicated all of the problems that Chief Graham has reported; they, subsequently, did the same on Folly Beach, James Island, Sullivan's Island, Mount Pleasant and North Charleston. With this data in hand, the Motorola headed back to determine what has to be done to eliminate them.

Chief Buckhannon reported that he had not had time to compile the Police Report.

## **7. Miscellaneous Business**

Councilman Loftus stated that there were a number of police departments using Twitter; he thought potential is there as way to disseminate information to residents about severe weather vents. He suggested that, possibly in 2010, it could be incorporated into the City's website.

Councilman Loftus recounted that the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue demonstration project had been in place for approximately nine (9) months, and he expressed his desire to move forward by presenting it to City Council at the next meeting to adopt the changes and make them permanent. Assuming that the Council approved, he stated that he would like to SCDOT complete the work of making the changes permanent by Memorial Day.

Chairman Buckhannon said he, too, had wanted to discuss 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue; between the Bridge Run and Easter, he thought that there would be sufficient traffic on the island to test the value of the changes. He also said that he would base his vote on the recommendations of Chief Buckhannon and Chief Graham.

Chief Buckhannon expressed his thoughts that the true test to the intersection would not come until Memorial Day, but he would monitor it over the weekends before.

Next Meeting Date: 5 p.m., Monday, May 4, 2009

## **8. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to adjourn at 6:27 p.m.; Councilman Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**