

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

11:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 7, 2014

The regular meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 7, 2014 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Committee members Burgis, Covington, Haynie, Rice and Chair Russell, Administrator Tucker, Treasurer Suggs, Assistant Dziuban and Clerk Copeland; Committee members Miller and Nelson were absent. A quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Russell 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 April 2, 2014 as submitted; Mr. Covington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

4. **Old Business**

Review of FY15 Budget

Administrator Tucker remarked that the "pink" budget has been revised since the Committee saw it in April. The Administrator stated that she will review the changes, and she hopes to leave the meeting with a vote of concurrence for this budget or what changes the Committee would like conveyed to Council. The discussion began with the ATAX fund balance roll-forward and an instruction on how to read and interpret the information contained therein; this schedule helps to keep track of the impact of revenues and expenditures on fund balance.

The Administrator directed the Committee's attention to the first page of the budget that shows the projected revenues for FY15; three (3) lines of import to the Committee are transfers-in to the General Fund from the ATAX fund made at the Ways and Means meeting of Council:

1)	for summer weekend part-time firefighters	\$ 10,929
2)	for four (4) firefighters	219,136
3)	for one (1) patrol officer	55,716

The ATAX fund has typically paid for the summer weekend firefighters. The four (4) firefighters represent some expansion of personnel in the Fire Department and one (1) more; the City has data showing that approximately fifty percent (50%) of the calls run by the Fire Department in the season are for out-of-towners. Again the City has documentation showing that the call volume for the Police Department increases by twenty-two percent (22%) in the season, so the justification for the ATAX Committee to fund one (1) patrol officer is reasonable. Administrator Tucker explained that these figures are both salary and benefits for the positions.

Proceeding to the ATAX budget, the Administrator pointed out the transfers-out which equal the transfers-in to General Fund revenue. On the expenditure side, the Ways and Means Committee chose to recommend reducing the holiday light displays to one (1) display; the

expenditure was twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) and now is five thousand dollars (\$5,000). One (1) benefit to the ATAX budget is reflected in the decision to correct an accounting error from years back where insurance was paid ahead; in FY15 that error is being corrected reducing the insurance expense. Contracted Services was also reduced when the Ways and Means Committee agreed that, since primarily BSOs fill holes on the beach, there would be fewer calls to the contractor to perform that function.

When the Committee last saw the budget, the amount to be funded from existing fund balance was less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); with the changes made at the Ways and Means Committee, the amount to be funded with existing fund balance has increased to two hundred seven thousand nine hundred sixty dollars (\$207,960). The biggest impact of that is the difference in funding for personnel. The repaving of Ocean Boulevard from 10th to 14th Avenues was deferred.

Chair Russell asked why the ongoing monitoring of the entire coastline has increased by ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Administrator Tucker explained that the City's contract is paid out in pieces, and the City has increased the number of monitorings at Breach Inlet.

Ms. Haynie asked how many ATVs the City has; the Administrator responded that both the Fire and Police have ATVs and an old one (1) that has been assigned to the Public Works Department. Treasurer Suggs said that the Police Department has one (1) ATV, and the Fire Department has two or three (2-3). Ms. Haynie asked how many were on duty on heavy weekends, like Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day; the Administrator said that on those days "it's all hands on deck;" the City also pulls in people from the Sheriff's office, the County and volunteers. The only persons who are not working are those sleeping because they have the next shift. Ms. Haynie then asked if the ATVs are assigned zones to cover on the beach; Administrator Tucker responded she thinks that is the case, but, if there is a lost child last seen in the water, everybody is called into service.

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to approve the FY15 ATAX budget as presented; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED on a vote of 4 to 1 with Mr. Covington casting the dissenting vote.

Administrator Tucker explained that this budget will have a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20th and, assuming there are no major changes, the budget will get Second Reading on at the Council meeting of Tuesday, May 27th.

5. New Business – None

6. Miscellaneous Business

Ms. Rice asked for guidance on acquiring another piece of public art for Front Beach; she indicated that she thinks the turtle sculpture there now adds to the general tone at Front Beach. The Administrator recounted that the turtle was purchased and donated by the Taylor family and that they have been told how nice it would be to have a companion piece to replace the kiosk, which is thought to be ineffective.

Ms. Rice expressed the opinion that the City should not depend on the Taylors and that the City has the means and should be explored by the City.

Administrator Tucker interpreted her statements as referring to the City's budget and talking about funding the public art piece in the budget.

Ms. Rice confirmed and said that it can wait until next year; it is process and will take time.

Chair Russell liked the idea and thought it could be considered for FY16.

Ms. Haynie asked about progress in improving the lighting at Front Beach. The Administrator stated that funding for swag lighting from palm tree to palm tree for Front Beach is included in the FY15 budget. But that appears to be quite expensive, so the City has turned to SCE&G for improved street lighting there; the lights that are at Front Beach now belong to the City. The Administrator has a meeting with an SCE&G representative tomorrow, Thursday, May 8th at 9:00 a.m. to get a proposal from them.

Chair Russell asked for an update on new public restrooms for Front Beach. Administrator Tucker explained that the City has retained the services of Liollo to assist the City to make decisions about what the best alternatives for the restrooms might be; they have held the kick-off meeting at staff level concerning the problem they are trying to tackle. At that meeting, it became clear that some of the options not on the current site might change foot-traffic patterns for the businesses; therefore, the businesses need to become involved now. The City does not need to become vested in a plan only to learn that it will take people away from Front Beach businesses. A meeting has been calendared that will include staff, Liollo staff and the businesses. At the current site, the City is very limited in what it can do because the lot is quite narrow to stay in compliance with ADA and flood regulations. Sites also under consideration are the two (2) municipal parking lots; they are attractive to the City because they would move from a V zone to an A zone and construction complications lessen. A third option is the small triangular area across from the Windjammer; Director Kerr is checking for the flood zoning for that spot. For the existing location, dialogue has occurred about having free-standing showers and cabanas there.

The Administrator requested that, in the future, if there are things that members want to discuss under *New Business* or *Miscellaneous Business*, they need to be detailed on the agenda.

Mr. Covington wanted to clarify his opinion of the Charleston Visitors Bureau; he stated that they do a good job for the City of Charleston, but his issue is that, when people stay in hotels in Charleston, they become day-visitors to the Isle of Palms who park in the neighborhoods, leave their trash in residents' yards, etc. In his opinion, the money sent to the CVB would be better spent advertising to families in Ohio, Nashville, Atlanta and Charlotte who will come to the island, rent a house, have plenty of parking, have bathing facilities and bathroom facilities.

Next Meeting Date: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 6, 2014 in Council Chambers.

7. Adjourn

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 a.m.; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk