

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Monday, March 2, 2009

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee was held at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 2, 2009 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Piening, Councilmen Loftus and Taylor, City Administrator Tucker, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Chairman Piening 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 Loftus moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 3, 2009 as submitted; Councilman Taylor seconded and the motion **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Citizens' Comments** - None

4. **Old Business**

A. Update on Term Limits for Boards and Commissions

Chairman Piening recounted that this had been discussed at the February meeting with no decision being reached. He stated that there had been twelve (12) new applicants in the fall in addition to the pool of applicants from prior years of twelve or thirteen (12-13); having twenty-five (25) persons interested in serving was the reason this topic has come forward for review.

Councilman Taylor said that he had the opinion that appointments were the responsibility of City Council and that the City did not need to incur the expense of writing an ordinance.

Councilman Loftus expressed his opinion that there was merit in limiting terms because new people brought fresh ideas and thoughts; he cautioned that there was the possibility of people becoming institutionalized if they stayed in a position too long. He also stated that he thought that candidates should be voted on individually, rather than in a group.

Councilman Taylor replied that voting on individuals has been done at times in the past. Chairman Piening added that he thought the reason recommendations had been presented in a group was that the Personnel Committee had previously studied the individual appointments and a Committee's work usually carried weight with Council as

it finalized a decision. Councilman Loftus countered that he did not think the Council should simply “rubber stamp” Committee recommendations. He sighted the example that he had learned at the most recent Planning Commission meeting that a member who was absent from that meeting had missed several others. Councilman Loftus questioned whether the member really wanted to serve on the Planning Commission or had the member’s life situation changed making meeting attendance impossible.

Councilman Taylor stated that Council could remove a member for attendance issues; it had been done in the past.

Councilman Taylor suggested that, in the future, the recommendations for appointments from the Personnel Committee could be made individually. Councilman Loftus responded that he could live with that idea assuming that Council members had an opportunity to comment.

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that, each August, questionnaires were sent to determine who wanted to continue to serve; she proposed asking, in that letter, how many meetings that person had been unable to attend over the past year. Therefore, when the Committee met to consider appointments, it would have the information before them – essentially another evaluation criteria.

Councilman Taylor wanted research done on the use of Executive Session to discuss the individual candidates; he believed that doing so did not meet the standards for Executive Session. Administrator Tucker provided the history behind the Personnel Committee’s discussing individuals in Executive Session and reported that applications had increased after the decision to go into Executive Session.

With the agreement to present the Committee’s recommendations individually, rather than as a group, Chairman Piening declared the subject closed.

B. Review of Capital Budgets for General Government and the Building Department for FY 2009-2010

Since these two (2) capital budgets were built around the relocation of the Building Department to City Hall, the building renovations to accomplish the relocation and the destruction of the building currently housing the Building Department, there was only one (1) change made – it was decided that the fireproof records cabinet was not needed at this time since the City was going more and more to electronic media.

The budget items reviewed by Committee were as follows:

General Government FY 2009-2010 Capital Budget

City Hall renovation to include Building Department, per PSB bond estimate	\$223,120
New Phone System	20,000

Special Projects

Undergrounding of utility lines	\$ 75,000
Total General Government Requests	\$321,120

Building Department FY 2009-2010 Capital Budget

Replace telephone system	\$ 7,500
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Facility Maintenance

Demolition of Building Dept.	\$ 10,000
Rehab former Building Dept site for overflow parking	10,000
Asbestos/lead survey	1,200
Possible hazardous materials removal	7,000
Moving Expense	<u>3,000</u>
Total Building Department Requests	\$ 38,700

5. New Business

Review of Operating Budgets for General Government and the Building Department for FY 2009-2010

Mayor and Council Operating Budget FY 2009-2010

The Administrator stated that there were few changes from last year's budget. One (1) change was the increase to *Telephone and Cable* that included twelve (12) full months of the County's \$25 per month per radio fee for radios for the Mayor and Chair of the Public Safety Committee. Administrator Tucker stated that the Treasurer always calls the insurance carrier during budget preparation to find out if an increase or decrease will be forthcoming and how much it will be; a five percent (5%) increase from SMIRF is included.

Councilman Loftus asked about the five hundred dollars (\$500) for *Vehicle Fuel and Oil*; the Administrator explained that the City will pay for one (1) tank of gas per week for the Mayor if he chooses to use it or will cover the mileage for travel for City business.

Councilman Loftus also asked if the full twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) budgeted for *Meetings and Seminars* would be used. Administrator Tucker answered that this line item paid expenses related to the MASC annual and winter meetings. Councilman Taylor suggested that the Administrator determine who would be attending these meetings and budget accordingly. It was agreed that no change would be made at this time.

Councilman Taylor asked about the *Non-capital Tools and Equipment* described as “a contingency for radio/pager replacements.” Administrator Tucker explained that this was a placeholder to replace a pager or telephone or to repair an 800 number walkie-talkie. The Councilman expressed surprise that the City used pagers, radios and phones. Administrator Tucker stated that the Staff relied on these devices for daily operations.

The final two (2) items – *Miscellaneous and Contingency* for \$6,000 and *Citizens and Employee Services* for \$4,500 – were questioned by the Committee as well. Administrator Tucker stated that, included in the Miscellaneous category were things that the Mayor would pay out of his fund, such as a portion of the holiday party, various event tickets that he purchases and gives to residents, etc. The Administrator agreed to provide detail on these two (2) line items.

General Government Operating Budget FY 2009-2010

Administrator Tucker explained that, in the salaries' line in all operating budgets, there was included an average merit increase of 2% and a COLA of 1.9%. She stated that the percentage normally used for the COLA was based upon the percentage the state allowed for the millage increase; this year that percentage is 3.8%. Upon receipt of that information, she contacted several local governments to find out how they were planning to handle COLA for this budget year and decided that 1.8% was the appropriate amount for the City in the fiscally conservative climate that exists. The next four (4) lines are functions of the Department's salaries. Included in *Debt Service Principal* are the Recreation Bond and bonds for the Public Safety Building and Fire Station 2

Administrator Tucker pointed out that *Debt Service – Interest* was lower than the previous year because there are residual bond proceeds to pay the interest on the bond for Fire Station 2. Certain line items, such as *Electricity & Gas* and *Maintenance & Service Contracts*, have been increased based on the Police Department's moving out of the building, causing General Government's expenses to increase because the Department will occupy more square footage. The Administrator stated that this budget year was somewhat tricky because there were several unknowns, i.e. when the Police Department will move to the Public Safety Building, how long the renovations will take and when the Building Department will move into their space in City Hall. Councilman

Taylor expressed his understanding that for six (6) months expenses were spread between two (2) departments and for six months expenses were attributed only to one (1); Administrator Tucker agreed.

Councilman Taylor stated that it would be helpful to know the number of radios being covered on the expense lines that refer to radios.

The noticeable increase in *Cleaning & Sanitary Supplies* included the cost of a deep cleaning of City Hall after the renovations have been completed, but before the Building Department moves in.

For the line item *Employee Training*, the Administrator explained that tuition reimbursements were charged against this account and that it would vary from year to year based on where employees were in the course of continuing their education and/or the number of employees who were seeking tuition reimbursement. Employees who might be interested in tuition reimbursement must declare by February because that is when budget preparations begin.

In total, Administrator Tucker reported that the General Government operating budget was three percent (3%) lower for FY 2009-2010 than FY 2008-2009.

Building and Planning Department Operating FY 2009-2010

As stated earlier, salaries have been adjusted by the 2% average merit increase and 1.9% COLA. Adjustments were also made to *Electricity & Gas, Water & Sewer and Maintenance & Service Contracts* based on part-year occupancy of the existing building and part year occupancy of space in City Hall. Overall, this budget has a three percent (3%) increase over the previous year.

Judicial and Legal Operating FY 2009-2010

Administrator Tucker noted that *Professional Services*, i.e. legal services, has been decreased for the coming fiscal year; she explained that the large increase seen in FY 2008-2009 was due to the unknowns surrounding the Beach Restoration Project. This budget is seven percent (7%) lower than the previous budget.

6. Miscellaneous

Councilman Loftus stated that he was going to present to the Public Safety Committee the suggestion to require housekeeping services to perform criminal background checks on their employees in order to obtain a business license from the City. He expressed his opinion that this action by the City would reduce the number of burglaries on the island. The Administrator commented that she had seen dialogue between Attorney

Sottile, Chief Buckhannon and Director Kerr that was not encouraging that the City would be in a position to make criminal background checks a requirement for certain businesses in order to obtain a business license.

Councilman Taylor questioned whether such a requirement could be limited to housekeeping businesses only. He also noted that a housekeeping employee might not have a criminal record because he/she was not involved in the actual burglary, but was the person assigned to find the places for burglarizing.

Councilman Piening countered that, if the City were to require employee criminal background checks to obtain a business license, it would be another case of government interference in private business. He was of the opinion that the responsibility belonged with the homeowner or rental company that hired the cleaning service.

There was lively debate, but no consensus was reached.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 7, 2009

MOTION: Chairman Piening moved to go into Executive Session at 6:43 p.m. to discuss an employee evaluation; Councilman Taylor seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Personnel Committee returned to regular session at 7:49 p.m., and Chairman Piening announced that there had been neither action nor vote taken in Executive Session.

7. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilman Taylor moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.; Councilman Loftus seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk

