

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
5:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 10, 2010

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30, Wednesday, March 10, 2010 in the Training Room of the Public Safety Building, 30 J.C. Long Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Loftus, Chair Bettelli, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon and City Clerk Copeland.

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 Loftus moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2010 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Citizens' Comments**

Karen Thompson of Sabre Advertising addressed the Committee on the Cycle South Carolina event, the largest state bike tour that will take place from June 12 – 18, 2010; the event is a fundraiser for the United Methodist Relief Center that is a client of Sabre Advertising. She was seeking approval for the event to go through Isle of Palms early in the morning on Sunday, June 13 en route to St. Stephen; she stated that she anticipates between one hundred fifty and two hundred (150-200) participants. Ms. Thompson stated that the bikers would be following all cycling laws, as well as local laws, and that the only markers would be cones or safety tape. When queried by Councilmember Loftus regarding the need for support from the Isle of Palms Police Department, she expected the bikers to enter and leave the island in groups of twenty-five to fifty (25-50) early enough in the day to avoid both pedestrian and vehicular traffic; therefore, she did not think it would be necessary to have special involvement by the IOP Police Department.

Chair Bettelli asked when any tape would be removed from the City's streets; Ms. Thompson said there would be people following the bikers that would remove any cones or tape placed on the island. He asked what time she expected the island to be clear of bikers if they left Mount Pleasant at 6 to 7 a.m.; she responded that the island should be clear by 9 a.m. at the latest.

Administrator Tucker stated that in 2008 City Council had adopted a list of approved annual events because the City receives so many requests for events to be held on the island for very worthy causes. She noted that this bicycle activity is not on that list of approved events. She also reminded members that the ALS Race, which is on the list, is scheduled for the previous day. She stated that, should the Committee approve the event, the City's insurance carrier would required a Certificate of Insurance from the organization naming the City as "an additional insured" and, with the predicted level of participation, one million dollars (\$1,000,000) of insurance would be required due to the risk involved to the City.

When asked by Chair Bettelli whether this would become an annual event, Ms. Thompson answered that it very well could become annual due to the increasing popularity of cycling nationwide.

Chair Bettelli asked Chief Buckhannon what his thoughts were about the event; the Chief responded that he was satisfied that there would not be a need for IOP resources for it.

According to Councilmember Bergwerf, insurance appeared to be the issue; therefore, Ms. Thompson was asked to leave the meeting to make whatever phone calls were necessary to learn the level of insurance acquired for the event.

The Administrator asked if other municipalities had given their approval for the event; Ms. Thompson stated that Sullivan's Island was to let her know, but that Chief Spruill at Mount Pleasant was totally supportive of it.

Steve Freudenheim, 1892 N. James Gregarie Road, Mount Pleasant, wanted to know what, if anything, the City intended to do about licensing non-residents' dogs; he stated that he had read that non-residents would be charged a higher licensing fee that he thought that would penalize non-residents. Chair Bettelli informed Mr. Freudenheim that City Council had acted not to cause non-residents to license their dogs.

Leola Hanbury, 3203 Hartnett Boulevard, initially asked if she understood that this was the end of the discussion on dog licensing, because she was under the impression that this Committee and City Council were still going to consider requiring non-residents to get dog licenses. Chair Bettelli assured her that there may be discussion, but he did not expect any action in the near future.

Ms. Hanbury shared her observations upon entering the Public Safety Building, which she described as incredible; she stated that it was not user friendly – there was not a human being on the entry level, and upon going to the second floor, as instructed, one may not see a human being yet giving a “cold and unfriendly atmosphere.” She suggested that, if the City were not in a position to hire someone to greet persons entering the building, volunteers might be sought to assist people.

After describing several scenarios of guests coming to the island with their dogs, Ms. Hanbury asked that, if there was to be any further action on visiting dogs, any law should be compassionate and that there should be waivers for unusual circumstances.

Karen Thompson re-entered the meeting and informed the Committee that the event had a five million dollar (\$5,000,000) insurance policy and that there would be no problem listing the City of Isle of Palms as an “additional Insured.” Administrator Tucker stated that the City must have the Certificate before the event takes place.

Administrator Tucker cautioned that, if the Committee approves the event, thereby, deviating from the approved list of City events, staff will no longer be able to turn away request for future events on the basis of an approved list. While the impact of this event appears to be very low, it does open the City up to creating a new list of approved events and cutting, or the Committee

will be seeing requests like this one frequently because there will not be a mechanism to stop them.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked if there was a process for adding to the “approved” list; the Administrator responded that this Committee could make the recommendation to City Council to add this, or any other, event to expand the list.

Administrator Tucker expressed concern that the person making the request for this particular event was not someone who was involved in the core planning for the event, but ancillary involved as the advertiser. She added that it was well within the realm of possibility that this event could require public safety resources that would cost the City. For these reasons, she recommended that the Committee deny the request.

Chair Bettelli reminded the Committee that the ALS Race was planned for Saturday, June 12 that would inconvenience residents and visitors, and, although this event would be early in the morning, there were plenty of islanders who were moving around at that hour at the beach.

Ms. Thompson responded to Councilwoman Bergwerf that the United Methodist Relief Center is a non-profit organization and that the company for whom she works does public relations for it.

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve this event and to add it to the City’s list of approved annual events; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED on a vote of 2 to 1 with Chair Bettelli casting the “nay” vote.**

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

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

Chief Graham reported that activities were moving forward and progress was being made to complete the punch list.

##### **B. Update on Civil Engineering for 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Palm Boulevard Intersection**

Chair Bettelli introduced Jeff Ingham and Mark Yodice of Thomas and Hutton to review the improvements to the intersection. They distributed a drawing of the changes that are planned for the intersection and reported that the bid package had been advertised and was due on March 16; the contract award is planned for the City Council meeting of March 23. According to the bid package, work is to begin around the first of April and to be completed before Memorial Day; the bid allows six (6) weeks for the project to account for weather and unexpected delays.

In response to Councilmember Loftus’ question about tearing up the road, Mr. Ingham stated that the only area where the road would be torn up was at the end of Cameron where a sidewalk and plantings would be placed. In addition, the intersection will have defined crosswalks, a concrete island in the turn on Palm Boulevard heading to Wild Dunes and permanent signage.

**C. Discussion of Fees and Licenses Related to Animal Control**

Chair Bettelli repeated that City Council had acted to increase the fees for residents to purchase dog licenses from two dollars to five dollars (\$2 to \$5) for residents. Each member of the Committee commented to the fact that there would be no dog collars at the Isle of Palms in the foreseeable future. Chair Bettelli asked Chief Buckhannon to communicate to Animal Control that, if they were to see a large influx of dogs to the beaches, the Committee wanted to be informed.

**D. Update on Bike Rack at the Public Safety Building**

Chief Buckhannon showed the members of the Committee the bike rack that he thought would serve the needs of residents; the rack holds as many as eight (8) bicycles.

Councilmember Loftus asked if galvanized steel would not be better than painted metal; Chief Buckhannon replied that, for the difference in cost, galvanized steel would not hold up any better in the beach environment.

**MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to approve the purchase of a bike rack and installation not to exceed \$700; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**E. Update on Digital Radios**

Chief Graham reported that two (2) sites had been looked at for placement of a tower on the island, i.e. in Wild Dunes at the water treatment plant and in the middle of the island at the water tower; the location in the middle of the island was deemed the best.

The Chief reported that Charleston County had met with the consultants it hired on March 5, and public safety officers from across the County were also present. She stated that all types of incidents involving the radios were included in the report to the consultants; the consultants are expected to present their recommendations to the County by a couple of weeks.

Chief Graham re-stated that she had been told that there would be no improvement to radio communications at the Isle of Palms without a tower being erected on the island. Administrator Tucker noted that, under the current code, the needed tower height was unacceptable; therefore, an ordinance would be required.

Councilmember Loftus asked how many parking spaces would be lost to erect the tower in the City parking lot since the Chief said the tower would required a footprint seventy-five feet by seventy-five feet (75' x 75'). Mr. Yodice with Thomas and Hutton stated that one parking space was equal to two hundred square feet (200 sq ft).

**5. New Business**

**A. Discussion of Cycle South Carolina – completed earlier in the meeting.**

**B. Review of Operating Budgets for Fire and Police Department for FY 2010-2011**

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee members that this was not the last time they would see these budgets since they will be matched up against the revenue budgets in April. As in other meetings, the Administrator stated that she would be discussing the bolded figures which represent increases from the previous budget.

Police Department Operating Budget for FY 2010-2011

Salaries	\$1,312,658
Based on current rates plus an estimated 4% pool available for performance-based adjustments effective 1/1/11.	
FICA expense	100,418
Retirement expense	143,417
These line items are a function of salaries for which the City has no control.	
Group health insurance	253,892
Current rate plus 10% increase. Finalized with 4/1/10 meeting to announce FY2010-2011 rates.	
Workers' Compensation	67,563
Estimated with budgeted salaries and current rate plus 5% estimated increase.	
Vehicle fuel and oil	90,625
Based on 12 months' usage at vendors' best estimate plus 25% cushion.	
Water and sewer	5,500
Based on annualized actual usage.	
Non-capital tools and equipment	2,000
Since laptops can be purchased for less than \$1,000 (capitalization cap), replacement of 1 included here.	
Maintenance & service contracts	35,580
Increase due to HVAC maintenance under warranty for FY10 and increased Enterpol expense.	
Cleaning and sanitary supplies	2,000
Increased based on actual.	
LTD insurance	5,907
Calculated on fulltime salaries.	

The Administrator pointed out that the City anticipates a reduction in insurance on line 81 due to the City's excellent safety record over the past three (3) years.

Councilmember Loftus suggested that the expense for Meetings and Seminars, line 74, could be reduced by sending fewer persons to the CALEA Re-accreditation Conference; Administrator Tucker defended the expense on the grounds that the conference is an excellent opportunity for City officials to network with other departments nationwide, plus it was always a positive experience for the agency.

The FY 2010-2011 Police Department budget as proposed has an overall increase of seven percent (7%).

**MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to forward the Police Department FY 2010-2011 Operating Budget to the Ways and Means Committee as proposed; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Fire Department Operating Budget FY 2010-2011

Salaries	\$1,381,581
Based on current salaries plus an estimated 4% pool available for performance-based increases effective 1/1/11.	
Estimated salaries, 3 additional firefighters	99,858
Salaries – part-time	36,238
FICA expense	116,102
Retirement expense	174,449
These line items are a function of salaries for which the City has no control.	
Group health expense	279,361
Current rate plus 10% increase. Finalized with 4/1/10 meeting to announce FY2010-2011 rates.	
Workers' Compensation	74,711
Estimated with budgeted salaries and current rate plus 5% estimated increase.	

Chief Graham started the budget discussion to explain the reasoning for adding three (3) firefighters, one (1) per shift, to the Fire Department. She stated that presently there nine (9) personnel per shift on the island, i.e. four (4) are at Fire Station 1, and five (5) at Fire Station 2; based on industry standards the City is understaffed even at ten (10) persons per shift. The Chief reported that a fire in one of the City's elevated thirty-five hundred square foot (3,500 sq ft) homes would require a call for mutual aid from Sullivan's Island that, in turn, leads Sullivan's Island to place a call for mutual aid from Mount Pleasant. She added that the call volume in Mount Pleasant has increased greatly and will ultimately limit their ability to respond to mutual aid calls. She stated that a call for a missing child on the beach would clear all personnel from Fire Station 1 requiring personnel from Fire Station 2 to go to Fire Station 1 for coverage. Chief Graham acknowledged that this was a substantial request in these economic times and asked that the Committee approve additional funding for part-time salaries if it were unable to approve the additional full-time staffing request.

The Chief acknowledged that the Department had delayed an ISO study several years ago because they were moving into the trailers and functioning in an abnormal setting; that study is overdue and the Department could get a call any day that she would not have cause to delay. She recounted that the 2001 ISO study had indicated that the City needed twelve (12) persons per shift. Chief Graham also noted that an ISO study could negatively affect insurance rates for property owners on the island. The cost for an ISO study would be fifty-five hundred to seven thousand dollars (\$5,500-7,000). Chief Graham's comments and the PowerPoint presentation made by Training Officer Maibach are attached as Exhibits A and B, respectively, to the historic record of the meeting.

Chair Bettelli asked about the participation from volunteers; Chief Graham indicated that participation was better, but these persons could not fully commit since that all have full-time jobs elsewhere. Only three (3) live here, and, of those three, one (1) is still in training while the other two (2) can participate in firefighting,

Administrator Tucker reviewed key points made by the Chief as the following;

- The 2001 ISO study had indicated that twelve (12) personnel should be on each shift, at nine (9), staffing is less than recommended;
- A new ISO study would likely recommend more than twelve (12) firefighters;
- An ISO study resulting in a lower rating could have a detrimental effect on insurance rates; and
- The Department would be violating OSHA regulations if firefighters were to enter a residential fire before the second truck arrives because two (2) firefighters must remain outside at all times should a firefighter inside need assistance.

Administrator Tucker stated that all of this information had been provided to the Committee on the outside possibility that of an unpleasant incident so that the Committee would be fully aware of the Fire Department personnel issues. She continued by stating that she could not recommend increasing the number of Fire Department personnel in this budget year.

Again Chief Graham asked the Committee to consider increasing the part-time salaries budget so that personnel could be brought in when needed, particularly, in the summer months. At the request of the Committee, the Administrator said she would work with Chief Graham and the City Treasurer to compute a viable increase to part-time salaries to account for additional personnel on the weekends during the tourist season. The Committee also asked that each of the costs associated to additional full-time personnel be segregated into a separate column on the budget when it was presented to Ways and Means.

Councilmember Loftus expressed concern over the fact that the Fire Department budget was increasing ten percent (10%) without the addition of personnel. To which Administrator Tucker responded that the Fire Department functioned differently from any other department in the City because, when a person was absent from the Fire Department for whatever reason, the position had to be filled. When a person was absent in other departments, the job was often left undone, or, in the case of the Police Department, Chief Buckhannon or Lt. Wright could fill the position.

In addition, the Administrator explained that, each year she and the Treasurer work on the Fire Department budget, they realize another nuance to its complexity. In FY10, they realized that overtime was being calculated incorrectly for budgeting purposes, and this year they have realized that holiday pay was not being included because the firefighters and police officers who work on holidays are paid for the time worked plus holiday pay. She stated that they are constantly refining the budget process.

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that she was not comfortable making changes to the budget with the revenue estimates still unknown, and she expressed the opinion that the entire City Council should be involved in a decision to increase the number of City employees. Chair Bettelli agreed that, historically, the entire Council had made that decision.

Vehicle fuel and oil	27,500
Based on 12 months' usage at vendors' best estimate plus 25% cushion.	
Vehicle maintenance	50,000
Includes 1 major PM each year plus 3 routing (oil change, etc.).	

Electricity and gas	22,706
Increase includes annualized PSB actual plus 5% SCE&G increase and added expense for exterior street lighting.	
Telephone & cable	36,108
Increase attributed to Nuvox telephone and data lines, Charleston Co monthly radio fee and internet services at both stations.	
Water and sewer	10,800
Annualized actual for PSB.	
Non-capital tools and equipment	6,500
General equipment needs.	
Maintenance contracts and service	28,235
Multiple items detailed in budget notes.	
Machinery and equipment repairs	10,000
Increase based on actual. Ethanol gas usage impacting small engines/motors.	
LTD insurance	6,666
Calculated on full-time salaries plus ten percent (10%) increase.	
Insurance	70,468
Includes property, liability, underground fuel tank & flood. Estimates 5% increase from provider.	
Professional services	4,160
Increase in annual ladder testing fees and addition of annual backflow testing.	

Including the three (3) additional firefighters, the proposed FY 2010-2011 Fire Department budget is sixteen percent (16%) higher than the FY 2009-2010 budget, with six percent (6%) of the increase attributed to the additional personnel.

**MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to present the FY 2010-2011 Fire Department operating budget as presented to the Ways and Means Committee; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**C. Consideration of Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000 - None**

## **6. Highlights of Departmental Reports**

### Fire Department

Over the month, Chief Graham reported that the Department responded to thirty-six (36) calls; twenty-three (23) of the calls were from residents, and twenty-one (21) calls were for EMS. All personnel continued Rapid Intervention Team training; additional training was provided on personal protective equipment and water supply and medical in-service training covered CPR re-certification for all career personnel. Firefighter Speelman has completed EMS training. Equipment maintenance expense was down for the month of February.

### Police Department

Chief Buckhannon reported that, on February 11, several officers had been involved in a Law Enforcement demonstration for a local cub scout group that included the Bomb Squad from Charleston County with their robot and the creation of a crime scene for the boys to take police work from beginning through to the paperwork. For the month, there were a total of thirty-eight hundred fifty-nine (3,859) calls; twenty-eight hundred eighty (2,880) were for the Police.



One hundred eighteen (118) reports were written in February and there were seventeen (17) arrests, and the majority of them were marijuana cases. Officers received one hundred twenty-six (126) hours of training; one (1) dispatcher completed the two-week 911 training course in Columbia. In the Livability arena, there were ten (10) noise complaints.

**7. Miscellaneous Business**

Disaster Preparedness Expo, June 18, 5-7 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 5, 2010

**8. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk