

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

5:30 p.m., Thursday, September 9, 2010

The Public Safety Committee held its regular meeting at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, September 9, 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, Assistant to the City Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. There was a quorum present to conduct business.

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 August 10, 2010 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Jonathan Schwartz, 1101C Ocean Boulevard, stated that he was representing "Luke and Ollie's," a restaurant at Front Beach. He made three (3) requests of the Committee; they were

- a) The placement of a change machine on Front Beach, because of the large number of persons who come into their business for change each weekend;
- b) A parking space assigned to "Luke and Ollie's" to accommodate their carryout business; and
- c) Replacement of the burned out street light in front of "Ben & Jerry's."

Chair Bettelli stated that the Committee would look into his first two (2) requests, but that he would be better served to contact SCE&G with the lighting problem.

4. Old Business

A. Update on Digital Radio Tower

Chief Graham reported that the user's group had met on September 2 and that Walt Smalls and Bill Tunick from Charleston County, Greg Saylor of Motorola and Kevin Henry of Crown Castle were attending this meeting to provide more explanations about the digital radio tower. Bill Tunick initiated the discussion by reporting that Kimball and Associates, the County's independent consultant, has submitted its report on the Motorola proposal; in addition, County Council approved the Capital Improvement plan for the digital radios in the amount of twelve and a half million dollars (\$12,500,000) for FY11 to add five (5) communication towers and to upgrade two (2) towers. According to Mr. Tunick, two (2) key points in the Kimball reports were that "the solution provided in a three (3) phase approach meets the stated requirements of the systems users and stakeholders . . . and the proposed complex design meets the overall goal of the County to enhance our coverage and to overcome the outside radial interference." Mr. Tunick summarized the Kimball reports as stating that the Motorola has presented "a valid proposal" and, "if implemented, would solve the problems, especially those of the coastal

communities.” Mr. Tunick explained that the next milestone for Kimball and Charleston County will be to negotiate the best contract with Motorola. Mr. Smalls commented that he anticipates going back to County Council in October or November to present the negotiated contract pricing with Motorola and approval for the new leases on the communication towers and to get approval to go forward. By way of clarification, Mr. Smalls explained that the presentation to County Council will include equipment, operating costs and the long-range leases on the towers since Charleston County will not own the communications towers, but lease space on them.

Chair Bettelli asked the optimum location and height for an Isle of Palms tower; Mr. Tunick responded that the optimum was placement at the site of the water tower with a height of two hundred thirty feet (230 ft.) and the second and third choices were a one hundred eighty-foot (180 ft.) tower on the grounds of the Recreation Center or at the site of the water tower. (Chief Graham distributed a rough drawing showing the proposed placement of the tower at the Recreation Center.) Mr. Smalls indicated that Charleston County wants a decision on a tower from the City before making the presentation to County Council in order to get one (1) approval for the entire system.

Councilmember Loftus reminded the representatives from Charleston County that he has asked in a previous meeting for a picture of the proposed tower; he reported that he has not yet seen a photograph or rendering of the tower. Chief Graham left the meeting in an effort to locate a picture.

Councilmember Loftus asked for confirmation of his understanding that a tower was needed on the island to counter interference from the ocean. Mr. Tunick responded that the interference was one (1) reason, and the second reason was to provide “in-building coverage throughout the island, especially in the larger buildings and condominium complexes.”

Administrator Tucker stated that, when the Charleston County Council is asked to make a decision on the Motorola project, they will be provided with supporting materials; since the Isle of Palms is being asked to make a decision regarding a tower, this Committee and City Council should also be provided with supporting materials. Included in those materials should be the relationship between the vendor and Charleston County, restrictions the Isle of Palms should put in place to protect itself from unanticipated problems, what the tower will look like, how the tower will be serviced, what protections exist for the City should the tower fall, the fail-safe position if the island’s residents do not approve the zoning change to allow for the tower and what the City can expect operationally from that fail-safe position.

Mr. Tunick repeated that a tower must be placed on the island in order to meet the requirements of the users group, which are the requirements that Motorola was charged with meeting.

Mr. Smalls stated that, when he presents to County Council, he will be seeking permission to enter into a lease with several vendors and into a lease with the entity that will build the towers, plus the purchase of equipment. The tower on the Isle of Palms is one (1) of the five (5) towers being proposed.

Chair Bettelli asked whether the City would need to sign a lease with Charleston County to erect a tower on the grounds of the Recreation Center. Administrator Tucker reminded the Chair that

the tower would belong to an unknown private vendor, not Charleston County; therefore, negotiations for a site would be between the private vendor and the owner of the site.

Responding to the Administrator's question regarding the term of the leases, Mr. Smalls stated that Charleston County typically entered into five-year (5 yr.) leases with multiple five-year (5 yr.) renewals.

Chief Graham returned to the meeting stating that she had been unable to retrieve the photograph, but noted that the tower being proposed for the island is very similar to the tower on 41st Avenue, only taller.

Administrator Tucker asked if there was any reason that the City of Isle of Palms could not independently negotiate with a private vendor for the construction and then lease space to Charleston County on that tower for its communications equipment. Mr. Smalls indicated that there were no such restrictions imposed on the City.

Chief Graham reminded the Committee that Greg Malcolm of Motorola had recommended, assuming that the construction of a one hundred eighty-foot (180 ft.) on the island is approved, the base should support a two hundred thirty-foot (230 ft.) tower to allow for future communications needs.

Councilmember Loftus expressed his concern over the presence of a one hundred eighty to two hundred thirty-foot (180-230 ft.) tower on a barrier island like the Isle of Palms, and the safety of the residents and visitors.

Kevin Henry, a construction manager with Crown Castle, stepped forward to address the issues related to tower construction; he stated the Crown Castle is one (1) of the largest tower providers in the United States. Mr. Henry stated that tower construction must meet very strict national codes and is governed by the Federal Communication Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration. He explained that Crown Castle employs a group of certified engineers whose job it is to ensure that its towers meet all of the guidelines; by meeting a standard referred to as Rev G, Crown Castle towers are built to structurally withstand winds in excess of two hundred miles per hour (200 mph).

Mr. Tunick commented that Crown Castle has constructed towers on other barrier islands, such as Hilton Head, and that the foundations for these towers are much deeper.

Responding to Councilmember Loftus, Mr. Henry stated that construction of a tower on the island would take three to six (3-6) months depending on weather and inspections. Mr. Henry stated that the inspections are performed by certified engineers with companies other than Crown Castle.

Councilmember Loftus asked how much time would be involved in re-building a tower felled by a hurricane on the level of Hurricane Hugo; Mr. Henry said it would likely take a month, but that a mobile tower referred to as a cell on wheels would be delivered to the site to provide communications in the interim.

Mr. Henry stated that the wind load for a tower on the island would be two hundred miles per hour (200 mph), and, responding to Administrator Tucker, stated that Crown Castle had not had any towers taken down by Hurricane Katrina. Councilmember Loftus then asked Mr. Henry whether Crown Castle had lost towers as a direct result of severe storms; Mr. Henry stated that a tower built in 1963 had gone down in Maryland approximately two years ago, but the tower had belonged to a company that Crown Castle purchased. Mr. Henry did recall one (1) other tower falling, but the circumstances had been the same. Mr. Henry commented that Crown Castle presently operates approximately twenty-three thousand (23,000) towers.

Administrator Tucker asked how much of an Isle of Palms' tower would benefit other users within the group; Mr. Tunick replied that Sullivan's Island would directly benefit, and some areas on the marsh side of Mount Pleasant would also receive some indirect benefit. The Administrator then asked whether consideration had been given to constructing a tower on Sullivan's Island rather than Isle of Palms. Mr. Tunick answered that the communications problems at the Isle of Palms would not be resolved by erecting a tower as far south as Sullivan's Island.

Charlie Fox, 1908 Mahone Court, Daniel Island, stated that he had attended a users' group meeting where additional information had been provided; therefore, he thought he could clarify some issues for the Committee. Mr. Fox explained that Charleston County had gone to Motorola stating that public safety officials had required a certain amount of coverage, and the Motorola engineers had come back with a proposal that meets the coverage requirements. Charleston County, Kimball and Associates and the members of the users' group have all agreed that the Motorola plan is a viable one. Mr. Fox explained that the Motorola plan includes an acceptance clause stating that, once Motorola builds the system as proposed, representatives from Charleston County, Motorola and Kimball will travel around the county testing the system; if, at any location, the communications coverage does not meet the minimum levels specified in the contract, Motorola will be obligated to erect another tower or do whatever is required to fix the problem. Mr. Fox suggested that, if a tower is not constructed on the Isle of Palms, Motorola would not guarantee the levels of coverage, meaning that, when residents or visitors need help, they would not be guaranteed of getting that help through the 911 system.

Chair Bettelli commented to Mr. Tunick and Mr. Smalls that information related to the acceptance process with Motorola should be included in the written documentation provided for City Council.

Chief Graham added that a tower would not only improve coverage on the street, but also provide in-building coverage; she stated that, without a tower on the island, the public safety community cannot be guaranteed communication in any building in any location on Isle of Palms.

Administrator Tucker re-stated her requirements for the written support to be presented to City Council; she added that this document should come before the Public Safety Committee before being presented to City Council.

B. Update on Public Safety Building

Administrator Tucker commented that the Public Safety Building continues to be a weekly work-in-progress. The Administrator reported that, in her latest communications with Cole+Russell, Dave Johnson had stated that seven (7) deadlines have been set related to the HVAC moisture problems that continue on the Fire Department's side of the building. (She reminded the Committee that two (2) types of HVAC systems operate in the building.) A distribution report was due to Cole+Russell from the vendor, and a balancing report indicating how the system was working through the areas served was yet to be reported by Cole+Russell. The insulation that has gotten wet is to be removed from the ceiling this week, and wet ceiling panels replaced. Considered to be the biggest concern with the system is the control panel and whether something is malfunctioning in the settings or whether the control panel needs to be replaced. Discussions are also on-going about the de-humidifiers and whether additional ones are needed to correct the problem permanently.

Chief Graham confirmed that the wet insulation has been removed from the duct work, but signs of moisture have reappeared today on the third floor and the musty smell has returned to the second floor. The thermostat in the Chief's office on second floor has been replaced with a humidistat, which means that the temperature control is being driven by both humidity and temperature. The Chief reported that discussions are ongoing regarding the dampers on the third floor and the possibility that the dampers are allowing too much air into the third floor.

Councilmember Loftus inquired about whether the final payment had been made to Mashburn, and Administrator Tucker stated that the City still holds the retainage on the contract.

Chief Buckhannon reported that spray insulation had been applied on the exterior walls in the garage and that the moisture build-up in the mechanical room on the first floor had dramatically diminished as a result.

C. Update on Abandoned Vessels

Chair Bettelli stated that the matter has been referred to the City Attorney; Administrator Tucker noted that the issue had been caught in the transition between Attorneys McCullough and Halversen.

5. New Business

A. Consideration of Transfer of Retired 4-Wheeler from Fire Department to Public Works Department

Chief Graham explained that the Fire Department had replaced a Bobcat ATV because it could no longer be relied upon in an emergency, but she believed that the vehicle could be of more service elsewhere in the City than would the five hundred to one thousand dollars (\$500-1,000) it might receive if sold. She discussed this matter with Public Works Director Pitts who was confident the 4-wheeler could be useful to the department to transport staff and equipment to beach access paths when the Department clears them at the beginning and end of season; in addition, the unit is easy to operate and uses little fuel.

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that the Public Works Committee had agreed to the equipment transfer.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to approve the transfer on a retired Bobcat 4-wheeler from the Fire Department to the Public Works Department with the approval of the Ways and Means Committee; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Consideration of Request for Bra's Across the Bridge Event from Clear Channel Communications

Councilmember Loftus stated that he could not support this request because the request had not been clear about how the donations would be used, and he thought the concept was about Clear Channel Communications selling sponsorships. He commented that the event was poorly thought out and suggested that breast cancer survivors might find the idea offensive.

Councilwoman Bergwerf questioned that support for the event from the Komen Foundation.

Administrator Tucker noted that she, like Councilmember Loftus, had first become aware of the concept when it had been discussed involving the Ravenel Bridge. The Administrator voiced her concerns over the safety of the participants, because it would be disruptive to the morning rush hour and distracting to drivers.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved not to approve the request for the Bras Across the Bridge event; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

Chief Graham initiated her comments by reporting that the IOP Fire Department had responded to a mutual aid call to assist with a working structure fire from the Mount Pleasant Fire Department on August 11. On August 13, units responded to the call of a "man down" on the beach; crews assumed care from bystanders who were administering CPR, removed the patient from the beach and Charleston County EMS transported the patient to East Cooper Hospital. In the course of the month, personnel treated eighty-six (86) jellyfish stings and three (3) stingray stings. One hundred twenty-one (121) fire inspections were performed, and two hundred forty-eight (248) violations were found. In addition, one hundred four (104) pre-incident surveys were completed. Vehicle maintenance indicates that scheduled preventative maintenance for departmental vehicles is back on track. The report of overtime for the month of August generated some general discussion related to the facts that overtime is inherent in shift work as the City adheres to federal and state labor laws. Chief Graham noted that overtime may be incurred for training when the training is mandatory and occurs off-island; voluntary training must be acquired in off-hours, but the Department does pay for the training.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

Chief Buckhannon picked up the overtime discussion by stating that the training related to preparation for the safety audit has generated some unavoidable overtime.

As for departmental activity, the Chief directed attention to page 2 of the written report for activity on August 7 and 8 when underage drinking issues were again cited at the Grand Pavilion in Wild Dunes. In August, fifty-three (53) Victim of Crime Forms were issued to homeowners for various violations, and ninety-two (92) Property Security Check Forms were issued to businesses or homeowners for property checks during the night. During the month, dispatchers responded to four thousand four hundred forty-eight (4,448) telephone calls; of the total, thirty-three hundred eight-three (3,383) calls were for the Police Department. In the two hundred thirty-three (233) traffic stops in the month, one hundred eleven (111) received citations. Of the forty-one (41) arrests, eighteen (18) were liquor law violations. The Livability Officer issued four (4) citations for noise violations.

Councilmember Loftus asked Chief Buckhannon for a summary of livability offenses since the season has ended, because he was interested in seeing properties that were cited more than once.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Chair Bettelli reminded the Committee of the ECCO bike ride across the island that would take place early in the morning on Saturday, September 11.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Thursday, October 7, 2010.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk