

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m., Thursday, October 6, 2011
Public Safety Building, 30 J.C. Long Boulevard

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 6, 2011 in the Training Room of the Public Safety Building located at 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 Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. A quorum was 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 Bergwerf moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 13, 2011 as submitted; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments** – None

4. **Old Business** - None

5. **New Business**

A. Update on Medical Equipment Loan Closet

Administrator Tucker related that the first task to make the medical equipment loan closet a reality was to find a location for it, and, because the Public Safety Building operates seven (7) days a week, it was determined to be the best location. Ms. Oltorik, who brought the concept before City Council, met with Chief Graham to locate a space; at the same time, City Attorney Halversen was tasked with drafting a document that would relieve the City of any liability related to the equipment. (A copy of the draft document was included in meeting packets.) Anyone who was to borrow from the closet would be required to execute this document. Assuming this Committee recommends the project for approval, it will go before City Council, and, upon their approval, the medical equipment loan closet would go into effect.

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Oltorik had distributed printed material to the members of the Committee and staff that recounted actions up to this time, as well as her proposed next steps in the process. Ms. Oltorik stated that, once the closet has all of the necessary approvals, she will publicize the program in the *Island Eye News* and request donations. Ms. Oltorik is having a medical procedure early in December and, barring any problems, plans to have the loan closet operational in January. She intends to handle the closet herself, but will have a substitute when she is out of town or otherwise unavailable. The operating hours of the loan closet will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; persons borrowing equipment would complete a sign-out sheet with his/her name, address, phone numbers and the equipment being used. Ms. Oltorik told the Committee that the Mayor had told her that he had several calls about donations in the days following her proposal to City Council; for that reason, she does not anticipate any problems with getting

medical equipment for the loan closet. She reported that she has contacts with persons who are qualified to check the donations to ensure their safety before being loaned out.

Councilmember Bergwerf inquired about the about the range of medical equipment that would be available for loan, and Ms. Oltorik replied that she only planned to have canes, crutches, walkers and wheelchairs.

When asked by Councilmember Loftus about how long equipment would be on loan, Ms. Oltorik stated that the length of time would depend upon the need, but she did not plan to limit the use.

Councilmember Loftus asked whether Ms. Oltorik would be loan medical equipment to persons from Mount Pleasant, she responded that the loan closet was intended to be an island initiative; she added that, to her, it was quality-of-life issue. On the other hand, if the Mount Pleasant person had a serious need, Ms. Oltorik said she would be hard-pressed to deny the request.

Chair Bettelli asked for Ms. Oltorik to provide the Committee with an outline of how the program would function and a copy of the proposed equipment sign-out sheet for the November meeting; the Chair also requested a set of guidelines that would include the fact that the closet is for island residents, their guests and visitors. The Committee agreed that they should have this information before they take the initiative to City Council for final approval.

B. Update on Consolidated Dispatch – Necessary Software Upgrades

Chief Buckhannon stated that several components of the Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch system were happening very quickly. Transitioning to the CAD system of the Consolidated Dispatch Center means that all agencies in the Charleston County division will all be using the same CAD system. By having one unified system, information will be readily available without having to go through multiple steps and quality assurance checks. The Chief related that Charleston County has gotten a grant that will pay for software licenses in all agencies that are not in the Consolidated Dispatch Center; the City will need three (3) licenses – two (2) for the working stations and one (1) for the alternate station. To make this happen, several other things need to occur, and they are as follows:

- 1) A direct data line with Charleston County, which will be accomplished through a Metro Ethernet (Metro E) line on a ten (10) megabyte system that is on state contract; the County will be picking up the cost of the line (\$500/month) for the first six (6) months, and, possibly, for the first year.
- 2) The second component is the hardware that must be in place, a Cisco router and Checkpoint firewall; the router is approximately thirteen hundred dollars (\$1,300) and the firewall is about twenty-one hundred (\$2,100) for a total of thirty-four hundred dollars (\$3,400) plus tax of three hundred dollars (\$300). This will provide for a secure connection between the City and Charleston County that will allow the City to work on its system and talk to the CAD system at the County.

- 3) The final component is that the City's records management system receives data from the CAD system so programming time is needed for the City's records management system to be able to talk to the CAD system. The estimated programming time is three to four (3-4) days at an estimated cost of one hundred seventy-five to two hundred dollars (\$175-200) per hour; the vendors estimate a cost of approximately five thousand dollars (\$5,000) of programming time – this amount is not a firm quote at this time.

Charleston County is operating in a limited time window and needs for the City to have this equipment in place by the end of January 2012. These actions will allow the City to have the CAD interface in place, to have a seamless transition when the Fire Department goes live on the silent dispatching for the mobile data terminals and to have the County underwrite the cost of the NCIC access. The savings on the NCIC access is approximately seven hundred dollars (\$700) per year to the City. Once the records management issues are resolved, the City will work into a process where officers on the road can do the necessary reports, upload them to the jail and reduce their time away from the island.

Administrator Tucker added that the accelerated timing means that these components are unbudgeted expenditures.

Chair Bettelli expressed understanding of the hardware and records management system, but he questioned expense to the City of the data line after six (6) months to a year. The Chair asked Chief Buckhannon if the data line was an anticipated cost for participating in the consolidated dispatch system.

The Chief responded that this specific data line was not discussed, but participants knew there would be some kind of cost to be able to communicate with the County-wide system. Chair Bettelli asked whether some type of IP (internet protocol) system was available, rather than a dedicated line. Chief Buckhannon responded that the dedicated line was necessary for security reasons.

Councilmember Loftus inquired about additional unbudgeted costs for FY12. The Chief answered that he did not foresee anything more, but additional costs could be incurred should the Charleston County system go to a consolidated records management system, which is in the discussion stages now. The County would, again, be paying for mobile data terminal licensing as part of another grant they have been awarded.

Responding to a second query from Councilmember Loftus, the Chief stated that the City does not need to upgrade the laptops officers use in the field; he added that Isle of Palms uses the same type of laptop that is used by the Charleston County Sheriff's Department.

Chief Buckhannon reminded the Committee that the Isle of Palms will join the consolidated dispatch system in 2013 by moving dispatchers to the new dispatch center. He also noted that, in Year 1, the City will continue to pay one hundred percent (100%) of dispatching costs; the City will pay fifty percent (50%) in Year 2; and, in Year 3, the County will pay one hundred percent (100%) of dispatching costs.

Councilmember Loftus commented that now was an opportune time to go back to the beginning of the project to assess and project the costs related to the City's joining the Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch system.

Administrator Tucker noted that, once the City begins to move personnel to the consolidated dispatch center, the City would be committed; she queried if, up to that point, there would be anything that the City could not "un-do" if it were to decide that the consolidated dispatch system does not work for Isle of Palms. Chief Buckhannon replied that the City could simply turn the lines off and use the existing CAD system.

In addition, the Administrator questioned whether any of the actions being taken would have an adverse impact on the other users of the Isle of Palms system, i.e. Sullivan's Island or the federal government. The Chief said they would not be impacted; the City will continue to provide dispatching services and monthly data to them.

Chair Bettelli asked for confirmation that these other users would not be required to have the Metro-E line, but would share information with the Isle of Palms; Chief Buckhannon stated that was correct. The Chair commented that this was an expense that needed to be considered when the City renews its contract with Sullivan's Island for dispatching services.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend to Ways and Means that, due to the accelerated schedule of the Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch system, the City proceed with the installation of the Metro-E data line, purchase the Cisco router and firewall and arrange for programming changes to the records management system in an amount not to exceed \$9,000 in unbudgeted expenses; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.

Chief Graham explained that the Fire Department would also have unanticipated expenses; she has asked for a list to present to the Committee.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Consideration of Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000

Award of Contract to Herndon Chevrolet in the amount of \$57,871.00, State Contract Pricing, for three (3) budgeted Chevrolet Impalas

Chair Bettelli stated that the City had budgeted approximately twenty-three thousand dollars (\$23,000) each for these patrol vehicles; the quoted price is just under twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) each.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend to Ways and Means to award the contract to Herndon Chevrolet in the amount of \$57,871.00, state contract pricing for three (3) budgeted Chevrolet Impalas for the Police Department; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.

Councilmember Loftus inquired about the age and mileage of the vehicles being retired; Chief Buckhannon replied that the vehicles were six (6) years old and each had mileage in excess of one hundred thousand (100,000) miles.

6. Highlights of Department Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

Chief Graham reported that Department personnel had responded to a high-rise structure fire on September 4 that was contained in the kitchen of a second floor unit and assisted the Awendaw Fire Department for a structure fire on island off the Intracoastal Waterway on September 11. In addition, personnel responded to two (2) falls of more than twelve (12) feet - one on September 15 and the second on September 17. The Fire Department responded to seventy-three (73) calls in September; thirty-eight (38) of the calls were for EMS.

Responding to Councilmember Loftus' inquiry about EMS response times, Chief Graham stated that they were "hit or miss;" according to the Chief, having a unit stationed on the island in the summer months was a definite advantage.

In September, eighty-five (85) fire inspections were performed where thirty-six (36) violations were found. The Chief pointed out that, in the same month of 2010, one hundred twenty (120) inspections were performed where two hundred seventy-one (271) violations were found.

Chief Graham was pleased to report that crews had poured concrete at the tower site on 41st Avenue earlier in the day; she also reported that Charleston County had approved Phase III of the digital radio system expansion. The tower is expected to be operational mid-January 2012.

The Chief distributed a copy of the presentation on the status of the digital radio expansion and upgrades that had been made to the user's group.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

Chief Buckhannon related that four (4) separate incidents of thefts from vehicles occurred on September 19; none of the vehicles was secured. Chief Buckhannon remarked that residents need to secure their belongings as well as their vehicles.

In September, dispatchers handled thirty-nine hundred thirteen (3,913) calls; of that number, twenty-nine hundred ninety-seven (2,997) were for the Police Department. Chief Buckhannon reported that the volume of calls was up twenty percent (20) for the same period in 2010. Of the two hundred seventeen (217) traffic stops in the month, seventy-nine (79) traffic citations were issued. Investigations handled a total of twenty (20) cases in the month; eleven (11) of the cases were closed. When academy training is completed, the one (1) experienced officer will have an additional four (4) weeks of training on the island; the two (2) un-experienced officers will have eight to twelve (8-12) weeks of additional training once back on the island. From the Livability report, the Chief indicated five (5) noise complaints had been made and three (3) instances of barking dogs.

Councilmember Loftus requested a summary of the Livability information for the season that has just ended; Chief Buckhannon stated that a summary is generated and that he would provide it for the Committee members. The Councilmember stated that he was hearing fewer and fewer complaints from residents; therefore, he was confident that visitors were getting the message.

7. Executive Session – not necessary

8. Miscellaneous Business

Chair Bettelli announced that the 7th Annual Barrier Island Ecothon would be held on Sunday, October 23; this activity is on the City's approved list of annual events.

Discussion of Off-Season Parking on Front Beach

Chair Bettelli related that residents have reported to him that, in the off-season when the kiosks are covered, Front Beach parking spaces area being occupied by employees and hotel guests leaving no parking available for people who want to take advantage of island businesses. One suggestion from the Chair was to leave the kiosks open with free parking in the parking lots for employees and hotel guests.

Councilmember Bergwerf countered that many residents look forward to the time of year when the kiosks are covered to park on Ocean and eat in island restaurants. She added that one Front Beach business owner had suggested that residents be allowed to park free at the kiosks year round using the hurricane re-entry stickers as identification.

Chair Bettelli pointed out that residential parking permit holders in the City of Charleston pay to park when visiting downtown business.

The Chair commented that the City needed to do what it could to promote the Front Beach businesses and to make it as easy as possible for their patrons to access their businesses.

Councilmember Loftus asked Chief Buckhannon to reflect on the problem and to bring possible solutions to the November meeting.

Administrator Tucker reminded everyone that a turtle release would take place at 1 p.m. on Friday, October 7 at the County Park. Councilmember Bergwerf added that the turtle is a two hundred thirty (230) pound female will only one (1) flipper.

The Annual Fire Department Parade will take place at 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 12.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Thursday, November 10, 2011 at City Hall.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m.; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.