

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
5:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 7, 2012

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Bergwerf, Mayor Cronin and Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland; quorum was present to conduct business. Invited guests were Richard Turner of Charleston County and Jeff Lansik representing the Connector Run.

1. Chair Bettelli called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

**MOTION: Mayor Cronin moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 12, 2012 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Citizens' Comments** – None

4. **Old Business**

**A. Status of Improvements to the Rental Placard for 911 Calls**

Administrator Tucker reported that staff has been reviewing various designs for the placard; Chief Graham feels that one (1) with the address in a color will meet the need described at the previous meeting. The Administrator added that the placard is not a WORD document, but a document that merges files; therefore, the staff does not have much flexibility in the design.

**B. Update on Improvements to the IOP Connector**

Richard Turner with Charleston County Transportation Development was present to answer questions Committee members may have related to the proposed bike/pedestrian path on the IOP Connector. Administrator Tucker repeated the Committee's concerns relative to maintaining a ten (10) foot wide center lane for emergency and to eliminating the need to raise the height of the side railings.

Mr. Turner related that the standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) state that to have a multi-use path adjacent to a travel lane, there must be either a forty-two (42) inch barrier between the travel lane and the multi-use lane or five (5) foot buffer. Administrator Tucker noted that the side railings on the Connector are at thirty-two (32) inches for the full length of the bridge. Mr. Turner had two (2) suggestions to maintain the ten (10) foot center lane; they are to have a two (2) foot buffer and eight (8) foot shoulder that would not be dedicated as a bike lane or to have a five (5) foot shoulder, four (4) foot bike path and one (1) foot buffer. Administrator Tucker noted that neither of these two (2) options has gotten SC DOT approval.

Mayor Cronin indicated that either option could be attained by striping the Connector.

Mr. Turner stated that the railing would have to be a minimum of forty-two (42) inches in height if the shoulder was to be less than five (5) feet wide for the safety of bikers.

Chair Bettelli asked about the width of the bike path on the Ben Sawyer Bridge; Mr. Turner said it was four (4) feet wide.

The Administrator reported that discussions had taken place at the Real Property Committee meeting the previous evening relative to a bike path from Breach Inlet to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue and that, in the Committee's opinion, it made more sense to improve the bike paths on either side of the roadway for the length of the island than to improve the Connector with the addition of a bike lane. Additionally, Administrator Tucker expressed doubt that the City had enough right-of-way from Breach Inlet to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue for regulation bike paths and that to have bike lanes the full length of Palm would certainly impact parking for day visitors to the island. She explained that regulation bike paths are extensions of the road, and Mr. Turner said that regulation bike paths must be four (4) feet wide.

Mayor Cronin brought out one of the visuals of the traffic and people congestion along Palm Boulevard in the summer and asked members to visualize the addition of bikers to the mix. He confirmed that the City has ample right-of-way from 21<sup>st</sup> to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenues; from 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenues, the pedestrian walk would have to be moved inland and the palm trees in the right-of-way would have to be removed or relocated.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked where the money would come from if the City decided to pursue an improvement to the Connector, and Administrator Tucker responded that the question did not have a good answer at this time. The Administrator repeated a statement made to Mr. Turner earlier in the day that this subject has "taken on a life of its own;" in actuality, the City and Charleston County are still in fact-finding mode.

Pursuant to discussions, the Administrator asked the Committee whether they wanted to proceed if the center lane remains ten (10) feet wide and height of the railing does not increase; the consensus was to move forward.

Mr. Turner reported that Charleston County will be re-surfacing Palm Boulevard from 41<sup>st</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenues; the contract will be signed within the month. He indicated that the County is committed to improvements, such as shoulder widening, when re-surfacing takes place. He fell short of committing to the construction of a bike path, but said he would look into the possibility.

Mr. Turner also stated that the DOT requirement for a sidewalk next to a road is that a five (5) foot offset exist from the travel-way or from the edge of the painted line.

According to Mr. Turner, whenever a resurfacing plan is developed, the staff is charged with what type of improvements can be accomplished at the same time to improve safety.

When asked whether the pavement could be a continuation of road, Mr. Turner indicated that the City could face issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in that there would not be a change in the texture of the surface to serve as a detectable warning surface.

### **C. Update on Connector Run**

Mr. Lansik reported that dialogues had taken place with both Acme Cantina and The Sea Biscuit before the Connector Run staff learned that the City would be willing to close J.C. Long Boulevard for a couple of hours after the run for celebration. Mr. Lansik related that their staff is working with island businesses on the logistics to determine the best way to work together.

Mayor Cronin asked if they had determined how they would distribute the beer; Mr. Lansik stated that whatever business has access to the cheapest beer to allow the most money to go to the cause of child abuse prevention.

Mr. Lansik noted that the Cooper River Bridge Run will be the end of March, and they want to have their promotional information available to draw as many of those participants back to the area for the Connector Run.

Administrator Tucker remarked that, although Island Time does not sell food, they should not be left out of the discussions because they will be seriously impacted by the road closing.

Mr. Lansik expects to have more to report at the March meeting.

## **5. New Business**

### **A. Discussion of Annual Transportation Sales Tax Funding and CTC Requests**

Administrator Tucker noted that this request comes to the City every year; this Committee, along with the Public Works Committee, compiles a prioritized list of three (3) projects that meet the funding requirements. The Administrator reminded the Committee that the County had been very generous with funding over several years that has provided for the completion of the 53<sup>rd</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue Drainage Project, as well as funding for the Waterway Boulevard bike path, the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection studies, bike path improvements, 21<sup>st</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue re-surfacing and the Lauden and Sparrow drainage projects. (On side note, the Administrator reported that the City has a new funding source, i.e. NPDES funds.)

Re-surfacing should not be a consideration because the only projects that would be considered are roads that are currently dirt roads; the types of projects that are considered are bike paths, drainage and new surfaces. Last year the City submitted the engineering for the 44<sup>th</sup> to 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Drainage, surfacing of Cassina Avenue and a multi-use path from 41<sup>st</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, the Administrator informed the Committee that Cassina will not be paved, but will receive a new surface of some type of rock that will not produce the white residue that gets onto Palm Boulevard. In 2011 the City's top priority did not receive any funding.

Administrator Tucker announced that the engineering/design for 42<sup>nd</sup> to 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue drainage will come before Ways and Means and City Council in February; the sole source contract to Civil Site Environmental (CSE) is for one hundred sixty-nine thousand dollars (\$169,000) spanning two (2) fiscal years and carries the project through construction oversight.

Mayor Cronin proposed that the next phase of drainage be the top priority for 2012; he noted that it had taken several years to accumulate the funds to accomplish the 53<sup>rd</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue project.

Mr. Turner explained that ten and a half million dollars (\$10,500,000) is made available to distribute through Transportation Sales Taxes (TST) each year to fund projects for local paving of dirt to asphalt roads, drainage improvements, intersection improvements, bike and pedestrian facilities, as well as public works improvements and resurfacing. Specific amounts of money are allocated to each area with four million dollars (\$4,000,000) for resurfacing.

Administrator Tucker said she understood that a ranking system had been established for awarding funding for projects and inquired if there was anything a local government could do to improve a project's ranking. Mr. Turner said he was not involved in the objective criteria, but the price tag for the project was one aspect of the objective criteria.

For a priority two project, Mayor Cronin suggested an improvement to the bike path coming off the Connector to the Palm Boulevard intersection. Chair Bettelli explained to Mr. Turner that the bike path ends as cyclists leave the Connector and they are sharing the road with vehicular traffic. Mr. Turner thought a multi-use path similar to the one on the other side on the Connector that would tie into the sidewalk might be a good solution. The Mayor stated that the City did not know how much money to request because this was the first time the subject had been broached; therefore the Mayor inquired about a proposal for the engineering on a multi-use path. Mr. Turner said that the City could request that Charleston County do the engineering; he indicated that they would look at the project and determine a cost that would include engineering and construction.

By way of clarification, Administrator Tucker repeated that, as the second priority, the request would be for a multi-use path from the foot of the bridge to Palm Boulevard, and the City would be willing for its property to be used.

## **B. Review of FY13 Capital Budget and Long-range Capital Plans for the Fire and Police Departments**

Based on an assignment given at Ways and Means, staff has segregated expenses relative to consolidated dispatch as part of the budgeting process. Other than the new budget, the majority of the items on these two (2) budgets are roll-forwards from prior years.

### **Fire Department**

The Administrator pointed out that two (2) capital leases for the fire trucks would be paid off in FY13. Of the recurring purchases for air packs and cylinders, bunker gear, and fire hose and appliances, the cost for bunker gear has increased.

Responding to Mayor Cronin's question about the decrease to air packs expense in FY16, Chief Graham explained that the old air packs are being replaced in quantities of four (4), and she does not anticipate having to replace four (4) air packs each year once all of the old ones have been replaced.

The mobile repeaters are a re-budget item; the Chief added that the number of repeaters has been reduced from three to two (3 to 2) due to the new radio system. The reason the repeaters have not been purchased is a hold up in the FCC license, which is not yet available.

The FY13 purchase of safety harnesses will provide a harness for every member of the Department.

A new item for the budget is the Porta-count machine for SCBA mask fit testing; Chief Graham explained that face masks are required to be air tight, and this piece of equipment will ensure that the City meets the OSHA requirements. In response to the Mayor's question about a less expensive tester, Chief Graham said that she would defer another item in order to get this equipment. As to the frequency of use, the Chief explained that the masks must be tested within ten (10) days of hiring a new firefighter, as well as annually for all personnel.

The jet ski to be replaced has been in service for three (3), going on four (4) years. The Chief reported that experience has taught her that the jet skis are not reliable after four (4) years.

The truck being replaced will cause a "shuffle down" in fleet vehicles that will result in the removal of a 2001 truck with very high mileage.

The items listed under Facility Maintenance will ultimately be in the Operating Budget, but appear here due to the dollar amounts. These items are included each year.

Chief Graham pointed out that replacing the stair chair and the RAD-57 meter were deferred to FY14.

Administrator Tucker foreshadowed that, at the Ways and Means Committee meeting, she and the Treasurer would be proposing that the threshold for capital items be raised to two thousand dollars (\$2,000) from one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Such an action would simplify record keeping for the Treasurer.

### **Police Department**

Like the Fire Department, the majority of items have come about as part of the regular rotation of capital items.

The replacement of the VHS in-car camera systems will be complete with the purchases in FY13 of digital cameras.

Two (2) new items have been added to the Police budget; they are portable drivers' license scanners for integration with the court system and the equipment to enable the automatic upload of patrol videos. In budgeting last year, the replacement of the court software was included for sixteen thousand dollars (\$16,000). The seventy-five hundred dollars (\$7,500) included here is the DL scanners of the court software expense to make the system whole. The automatic upload of patrol videos makes for less handling of the videos of traffic stops; the officers can drive into the police garage, and the server will wirelessly upload the

videos from the digital in-car cameras. The Chief assured the Mayor that the information would be admissible in court.

Mayor Cronin questioned the purchase of six (6) patrol vehicles in one (1) year with no purchases the following year and inquired about a way to level out the expense. Chief Buckhannon explained that, in 2007, the Department had added two (2) new positions and the Livability officer thereby adding three (3) vehicles to the normal rotation of three (3). Chief Buckhannon also called the Committee's attention to replacement of four wheel drive vehicles that are scheduled for replacement next year

When asked about the mileage of the vehicles, the Chief reported that one (1) has more than one hundred twenty thousand (120,000) miles, one has more than one hundred ten thousand (110,000) miles and the remaining four (4) have more than ninety thousand (90,000) miles on them.

The Administrator said that staff would study the budget to determine if they could find a way to level out expenditures.

Mayor Cronin then asked pointed to the replacement of radios in FY16 and FY17 for nearly seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000). Chief Graham explained that the replacements were in anticipation of Phase 2 compliance relative to narrow banding and FCC in 2017. The Mayor expressed the opinion that the City should begin to set aside money for an obligation of that dollar amount. Administrator Tucker remarked that this radio replacement was not a requirement of Charleston County, but of the FCC. Chief Graham commented that the City may need to reduce the number of radios due to the cost of the radios themselves and the increased monthly fees to Charleston County which may be as much as fifty dollars (\$50.00) per month.

### **Consolidated Dispatch**

Administrator Tucker explained that the purpose for this budget was to put forth the types of expenses the City will have as it prepares for and moves to consolidated dispatch; certain items have been taken from the capital budgets and placed here to segregate transition expenses.

Since the vehicle computers being purchased in FY13 are part of a grant that Charleston County got; when they are replaced in FY17, there may not be a grant. For that reason, staff believes that the replacement cost will be closer to forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) than to the twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) indicated in FY13.

Since the City is probably eighteen (18) months away from the actual move to consolidate dispatch, these numbers are preliminary. Administrator Tucker stated that a retreat is being planned for the Consolidated Dispatch Board, of which Chief Buckhannon is a member, plus other members of the public safety community who will be impacted. The City anticipates getting more concrete information from that retreat.

Chief Graham noted that the eight (8) vehicle computers in FY13 are a re-budget from FY12. These computers will have pre-plans, a mapping capability, pre-incident surveys, hydrant

locations, etc. Chief Graham realized that the computers will require air cards for internet access which will be additional monthly expense.

Other items included in the consolidated dispatch budget are a station alerting system mandated by Charleston County, increased software expense for the software the City now uses, the re-numbering of helmets and vehicles, and a centralized accountability system, which keeps track of who is where in an event.

In generating this budget, the Administrator contacted Folly Beach to learn exactly what had happened to cause them to back out of consolidated dispatch; contact was made to ensure that the City's transition to consolidated dispatch was successful by learning from another's mistakes. The fact that they did not maintain a presence in their old dispatch center and someone monitoring that phone line was unfortunate for them; residents are accustomed to a certain level of local non-emergency service. Administrator Tucker, therefore, was proposing that, in the transition period and for one (1) full beach season, the City maintain the expense of staffing around-the-clock, twenty-four seven (24/7), the dispatch center to monitor what is going on at the County level and intervene if and when a call goes awry.

Answering Councilmember Bergwerf's question, Administrator Tucker stated that Charleston County has scheduled the Isle of Palms to join consolidated dispatch on July 1, 2013. Both Chief Buckhannon and Chief Graham agree that to join in the middle of a beach season would be a big mistake, so the City is proposing a move after the beach season.

Another issue that plagued Folly Beach was resident education. The Administrator envisions a piece of educational literature being mailed to every residence in the City explaining what is going to happen, what the differences are going to be and the changes residents can expect.

In addition, there will be on-going charges for software and information upgrades that will be made at the County level; the Dispatch Board is having discussions about information mechanisms that need to be part of the county system that are not now part of it. Chief Buckhannon stated that the records management component is in the City's budget now; the City pays for a product called Interpol that is used for report writing and dispatching. Ultimately all participants in consolidated dispatch may have the same records management system.

Chief Graham indicated that the East Cooper public safety officials are wanting to transition to consolidated dispatch as a group.

When the Mayor asked how calls to the livability line would be handled, Chief Buckhannon said there would be no difference, i.e. when a call comes in on that line and the livability officer is not on duty, it automatically rings into dispatch after the third ring. Administrator Tucker said that this was the type of call that makes maintaining a staff presence on the island during the transition important.

On the subject of public education, Chief Buckhannon reported that the dispatch center has produced video tapes and pamphlets that explain the process when a call is made to the center; they explain that the call initially is responded to by a call-taker who then transfers it to a dispatcher who is sending an officer to the scene while the caller continues to answer questions.

Citizens need to understand that someone is coming to their aid while the dispatcher continues to gather information.

Chief Buckhannon commented that Charleston County will over-hire before the City's dispatchers move to the call center; therefore, if the City decides to maintain its dispatch center, employees will be in a position to stay on the island. The Mayor countered that he did not want to be responsible for that dispatcher not having a position at the County in a couple of years when the City finds that it no longer needs an island presence.

### **C. Prioritization of Projects in Excess of \$250,000**

Administrator Tucker noted that this list was last reviewed two (2) years ago; she believes it to be a good exercise to help the staff understand what the policy-setting body's priorities are. No decisions are expected at this meeting, but the Committee will be asked at the March meeting to generate a list of its top five (5) projects. Once staff has the priority list from each Committee, they will be compiled into a single priority list for the Ways and Means Committee meeting. The last is different from its last review; additions have been made based on input from department managers and a couple of items that had been removed have been added back for consideration by this seated Council, for example the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue roundabout and the beachfront outpost.

### **D. Consideration of Contracts in excess of \$10,000 – None**

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

### **Fire Department**

For the month of January, Chief Graham reported that personnel had responded to thirty-five (35) calls, twenty (20) of which were EMS calls. One full-time firefighter has been hired; he is a recent graduate of the Fire Academy which he attended at his own expense. The Chief will be interviewing three (3) candidates for the Fire Inspector position on Wednesday; she informed the Committee that she expects to have the position filled in four to six (4-6) weeks.

### **Police Department**

Chief Buckhannon reported that one (1) incident of a fraudulent vacation rental occurred in January; he anticipates the problem to get worse as the season nears. Officers investigating a couple of burglaries at the Sea Cabins were able to develop a suspect and charged someone; some of the property was recovered and some was found to be damaged. For the month, dispatchers responded to thirty-seven hundred fifty-eight (3,758) calls, and thirty-one hundred twenty (3,120) were for the Police Department. Ninety-seven (97) citations were written from the three hundred fifteen (315) traffic stops. The two (2) officers that completed the academy in November should be released from field training next week; interviews are beginning to fill the one (1) vacancy in the department. In January, five (5) noise complaints were made, and one (1) citation was written.

## **7. Executive Session – not needed**



**8. Miscellaneous Business**

Chair Bettelli reminded the Committee that the MS Challenge Walk will be Sunday, March 4.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5 p.m., Thursday, March 15 in the Conference Room.

**9. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m.; Mayor Cronin seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk