

**THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2009

**Time:** 6:00 P.M.

**Present from Town Council:** Thomas D. Peeples, *Mayor*; Ken Heitzke, *Mayor Pro-Tem* Drew Laughlin, Bill Ferguson, George Williams, John Safay, *Councilmen*.

**Present from Town Staff:** Stephen G. Riley, *Town Manager*; Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*; Curtis Coltrane, *Assistant Town Manager*; Charles Cousins, *Community Development Director*; Susan Simmons, *Director of Finance*; Nancy Gasen, *Human Resources Director*; Scott Liggett, *Public Projects and Facilities Director*; Tom Fultz, *Director Administrative Services*; Jill Foster, *Community Development Deputy Director*; Steven Markiw, *Deputy Director of Finance*; Terri Lewis, *LMO Official*; Randy Nicholson, *Comprehensive Planning Manager*; Bob Klein, *Building Official*; Vicki Pfannenschmidt, *Administrative Assistant*

**Present from Media:** Daniel Brownstein, *Island Packet*

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**1. Call to Order**

**2. FOIA Compliance** – Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

**3. Review of Budgets of Affiliated Agencies**

**a. Drug Court**

The Mayor asked the Council members if there were any questions for the applicant. Manning Smith indicated his presence and availability to answer any questions they may have. Mayor Peeples said that they would be following suit with the recommendations of the Town Manager for the Drug Court budget and he expressed his appreciation to Mr. Smith for their excellent work.

**b. Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority (LRTA)/Palmetto Breeze**

The Manager's budget recommendation did not match the requested amount. Rochelle Ferguson provided an overview of the Authority's goals for the upcoming fiscal year as well as some of their recent accomplishments. Mayor Peeples noted that the issue was they really could not fund everything that they would like to and he thought the Manager's budget recommendation was appropriate. The Town Manager added that this was not a reflection on the proposal itself but rather a reflection of the budget realities the Town was facing this year.

**c. Beaufort County Sheriff's Office (BCSO)**

Michael Hatfield, Chief Deputy, introduced himself and expressed Sheriff Tanner's regrets that he was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Suzanne Cook, Chief Financial Officer, presented the B.C. Sheriff's office proposed budget, including new requests in the amount of \$266,728.00. Those included \$50,000 in overtime costs for bar patrols, one new

patrol officer with vehicle and accessories as well as an investigator with vehicle and accessories. However, because of decreases in other areas of the budget, they were really only asking for an increase of approximately \$84,000.00. She then invited questions from the Council members.

In light of the recent ordinance changes enacted by Town Council to strengthen public nuisance laws and limit the hours of alcohol consumption, Mr. Safay inquired about the Sheriff's expectations that the department would need this additional funding for bar patrols. Chief Deputy Hatfield mentioned that not only were they taking on the enforcement of the Town's new ordinances, but the department also agreed to take over alcohol enforcement from the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

Mr. Williams inquired if they felt it was imperative to fund both a patrol officer and an investigator. Chief Deputy Hatfield responded that Sheriff Tanner had indicated that the investigator was a "must have" but the other position could be conceded if that would help.

Mayor Peoples observed that the items listed as budget cutbacks were really a function of the Sheriff's decision to delay replacement purchases. The Mayor said that in his mind, all that meant was next year, the department would need a bigger budget to accommodate all the equipment/vehicle replacements that were postponed. He said he would be more inclined to agree to the overtime for the bar patrols than for adding personnel and operational equipment. It was not that he did not believe the Sheriff needed what he was requesting, but simply the Town could not afford to accommodate everyone's budget requests this year.

With respect to the overtime funding request for bar patrols, Mr. Laughlin observed that all the money the town spends on marketing our Island to visitors – a lot of that gets jeopardized with one newspaper story about a shooting at a bar. And he did not want to compromise the Sheriff's ability to police the bar's trouble-spots.

Mr. Heitzke asked for an explanation of the request for a patrol officer. Chief Deputy Hatfield replied that the officer would be assisting with the bar checks as a primary responsibility while the investigator would also be doing alcohol beverage control enforcement in addition to bar checks.

Mr. Williams said he would like to ask that the Town Manager take a look at the budget requests for \$50,000 overtime, one investigator and related operational equipment to determine how that would impact the Town's proposed overall budget. The Mayor asked Steve Riley to provide Council with options for what budget actions the Town could take in order to be able to fund the Sheriff's requests.

**d. Island Recreation Association**

Alan Perry, President of the Association was present to answer Town Council's questions. There was a brief discussion concerning the general budget, but no action was recommended.

**e. Shore Beach Services, Inc.**

Ralph Wagner was present to answer questions.

Mayor Peeples said that he would like to increase the number of recycling trash cans and doggie bag dispensers on the beach and more recycling cans on the pathways. To fund these additional expenses, the Mayor said he thought the Town needed to consider re-instating the beach parking fee at Coligny Beach Park. He would like the Town Manager to investigate this possibility. Ralph Wagner advised that he could provide the cost for the recycling containers.

**f. Coastal Discovery Museum**

Michael Marks approached the podium and offered to answer any questions. Mr. Williams said the only question he had was where the cost for the turtle program was funded; it appeared that it used to be in the capital projects and was now in the operating budget. Mr. Marks confirmed that was correct.

**g. Hilton Head Area Hospitality Association**

Mr. Williams noted that there was no line item in their budget for the Island Ambassador Program. Anne-Marie Adams responded that they had been asked to look at a more cost-efficient way to deliver that curriculum so the program was being tabled for a year while they explored options. Mr. Williams wondered if the Hospitality Association programs shouldn't be handled by another organization, such as the Chamber of Commerce. He thought it would also be less expensive.

Mr. Safay inquired about the "professional fees" line item in their budget. Ms. Adams said that the association had made an investment to promote the Hilton Head Wine and Food Festival to upgrade their capability to attract representatives in the wine industry and this incurred a consulting fee. They also pulled in a couple of professionals to work with their wine judging and the vendor process. This would enable them to upgrade their capability to be competitive with some other high-end competitions and festivals with the same target markets.

**h. Chamber of Commerce**

Susan Thomas, Vice President of the Visitors and Convention Bureau introduced herself and offered to answer any questions. She offered a brief overview of the tourist market up-to-date and the outlook for future bookings.

**4. Review of General Operating Budget**

Steve Riley said that during his power point presentation last week, he neglected to thank Susan Simmons and Steven Markiw on their work putting the budget together and all of the department heads for their work in reducing budget costs. He did not have anything specific to review and so invited questions from the council members.

There followed a detailed discussion of various budget items. Council members had some specific questions about the budget which staff answered.

**5. Review of Debt Service Budget**

Susan Simmons said that there was very little change in the debt service budget this year.

**6. Appearance by Citizens**

None.

**12. Adjournment**

At 7:18 p.m., Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn. Mr. Ferguson seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

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Susan Blake, Secretary

Approved:

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Thomas D. Peeples, Mayor