

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
**INTERGOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Monday, November 5, 2018  
Regular Meeting

Members Present: Bill Harkins, *Chairman*, David Ames, *Council Member*, David Bennett, *Mayor and Committee Member*

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Captain Angela Viens, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Kierra Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Tallulah Trice, *Director of Beaufort County Animal Shelter*; Franny Gerthoffer, *Hilton Head Island Humane Association*; Chris Inglese, Esq.; Frank Babel, *Co-Chair of the Hilton Head Island Bicycle Advisory Committee*; Heather Rath, Patsy Brison, Larry Landry

Staff Present: Josh Gruber, *Assistant Town Manager*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; Chris Blankenship, *Deputy Fire Chief- Operations*; Scott Liggett, *Director of Public Projects & Facilities/ Chief Engineer*; Jeff Buckalew, *Town Engineer*; Charles Cousins, *Director of Community Development*; Shawn Colin, *Deputy Director of Community Development*; Darrin Shoemaker, *Traffic & Transportation Engineer*; Joheida Fister; *Fire Marshal*; Tom Bouthillet, *Battalion Chief- Emergency Medical Services*; Cathy Jones-Gooding, *E911 Communications Manager*; Tom Dunn, *Emergency Management Coordinator*; Carolyn Grant, *Communications Director*; Jenn McEwen, *Director of Cultural Affairs*; Jayme Lopko, *Senior Planner*; Taylor Ladd, *Senior Planner- DRZ*; Teri Lewis, *LMO Official*; Chris Darnell, *Urban Designer*; Phyllis Deiter, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Media Present: Eleanor Lightsey, *Lowcountry Inside Track*

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM by Chairman Harkins.

**2. Freedom of Information Act 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. Approval of Minutes**

- a. A motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2018 Intergovernmental and Public Safety Committee meeting was made by Ames and seconded by Bennett. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.
- b. A motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2018 Intergovernmental and Public Safety Committee Special meeting was amended by Mr. Ames. It was requested that the comment made by a citizen to draft a resolution be included in the minutes. With that amendment, a motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2018 Intergovernmental and Public Safety Committee Special meeting was made by Ames and seconded by Mayor Bennett. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

#### 4. Unfinished Business

##### a. Overhead Lighting of William Hilton Parkway at Un-signalized High-Speed Crosswalks

Jeff Buckalew started the discussion by providing highlights from the September 10, 2018 meeting. The proposed measures included markings on pavement, “PED XING” ahead, more reflectors in the area, more consistent signage (yellow diamond-shaped walking man sign) straddling both sides of the lanes of traffic, and illuminated LED lights around those signs. At the subsequent meeting, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, after much public input and consideration, the recommendations were revised to remove the LED lighting around the perimeter of the signs but to pursue, investigate and develop a plan for lighting of the crosswalks. This would not be an Island-wide policy with changes for street intersections and pathways. Rather, the Town was looking at the noted 11 high speed un-signalized crosswalks on US 278. The prototype model idea was to illuminate the entire crosswalk for motorists to identify people crossing at night. Today’s meeting was to speak about what has been learned about illuminating the crosswalks. Regulations and design parameters of all of these crosswalks are within South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) right-of-way. Therefore, the Town must obtain an SCDOT encroachment permit to do any work. Mr. Buckalew explained that SCDOT strictly adheres to the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials) Roadway Lighting Design Guide which sets forth the average illuminance standards per the type of road. Mr. Harkins asked about lighting standards for this municipality. There was further discussion on illumination options, paying particular attention to avoiding confusion around pedestrians and motorists. The Town would need to meet the SCDOT standards and obtain approval from the Design Review Board for the aesthetic appeal of the lights. Town Staff has been in contact with Palmetto Electric Cooperative Incorporated (PECI), who has provided some preliminary layouts looking to meet the SCDOT standards. Mr. Ames questioned the safety of the pole as well as the type and style the Town was recommending.

Conversation continued, focusing on meeting SCDOT specifications. In order to meet SCDOT standards, some of these pole locations may change, paying particular attention to those that might require a right- of-easement for Palmetto Electric and the Town. Palmetto Electric gave the Town preliminary cost estimates: roughly \$20,000 for each location. The Town would own the pole and be responsible for the power bill. Palmetto Electric would offer the Town a long-term 15 year agreement, where they would provide operation and maintenance of the light. Mr. Harkins asked if Mr. Buckalew would succinctly describe what the features that are in the Yacht Cove crosswalk template. He understood the recommendation to the Town Council includes: markings on the Pavement: “PED XING” on each lane off set in advance of the crosswalk, raised reflectors in each of the lanes to further illuminate the stripe, each side of the road-ways would contain a walking man sign, each sign post would have reflective strips, and additional reflectors placed on the concrete noses. In addition, at the directive at the last meeting, there is the potential for 3 poles given the width and illumination requirements needed by SCDOT and Palmetto Electric.

Mr. Harkins opened up the floor for public comments. Frank Babel addressed the committee, speaking about South Forest Beach Drive and the idea that this area is substantially different from the high-speed cross walks on US 278. Two different prototypes will be needed to

address different concerns. Brian Bobinchuck asked the Committee if these lights had the potential to be solar powered. Mr. Buckalew indicated that they could look into this as an option. Patsy Brison concurred with Mr. Babel and spoke further about South Forest Beach Drive. She also addressed the draft policy she provided to the committee which included the International Dark Sky Association principals, the Illuminating Engineers Society (IES) principals and the Complete Streets philosophy. While she appreciates there is movement forward, Ms. Brison urges the Committee to keep pushing to see this done. Other residents spoke in favor of reducing the speed limit on the Island roads.

Mr. Harkins brought the matter back to the dais. Ms. Ames indicated that he would be in favor of a motion that moved the Committee towards lighting the intersection at Yacht Cove but would like to explore the design alternatives to make a community decision. He also noted that speed enforcement should be a part of the equation. Further conversation ensued. Mr. Ames went on to make a motion to move forward with the staff recommendations for Yacht Cove crosswalks advancing CIP funds in its 2018-2019 budget. He would like to pursue options for lighting design after more information on illumination options are available. Mr. Harkins reiterated the recommendation going to the Town Council colleagues with Town Staff's noted approach. Mayor Bennett seconded the motion.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. Beaufort County Animal Control Ordinance Amendment**

Chairman Harkins welcomed those from the County, including Tallulah Trice, Director of Beaufort County Animal Shelter, and Franny Gerthoffer, Hilton Head Island Humane Association. Ms. Trice began by addressing the details that directly pertained to the changes in the Beaufort County Animal Control Ordinance Amendment. Since 2011, Hilton Head Island Humane Association and the Beaufort County Animal Shelter have been working together. This private-public partnership has had excellent results, including reducing the 86% euthanasia rate down to 12% (almost a no kill rate.) These draft ordinance changes brought forward today are important to the overall prevention, protection and spay/neutering in Beaufort County. One of the changes is the definition of a restricted breed, in particular, the definition of a "pit-bull." This was noted as not pertaining to the aggression in the breed but rather the problem with over-population. The second definition change would be for the word, "muzzle." It would establish the correct way to restrain a dog, thereby causing less attacks in the community. Mayor Bennett asked about the definition change of a "dangerous dog", defined as one who has injured someone seriously. Beaufort County would like to have the same definition as the State of South Carolina, allowing the Sheriff's department of enforce state law when necessary. Another change is putting in place an Administrative citation. This would be similar to a parking ticket as opposed to the current charge of going in front of the magistrate court. Before a criminal charge is placed on the animal owner, Beaufort County Animal Control would have the first-second-third offenses be monetary penalties.

Ms. Trice asked if there were any questions. Mr. Ames spoke of an incident in Hilton Head Planation, asking if these ordinance changes would help alleviate the noted problem. Ms.

Trice explained the policy is for the Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) to be contacted for every dog bite. They are instructed to contact Beaufort County Animal Control or the Sheriff's department so there can be follow up, making sure a dangerous dog doesn't continue to bite. Chris Inglese, Assistant County Attorney for Beaufort County, addressed several questions with the Committee regarding dog bites and citations within the courts.

Additional questions were asked from the public. Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney, came forward to address further concerns regarding the definition of Serious Injury, Tethering and Administrative Citations. Mr. Hulbert noted that he would like to ensure that Town Council understands what the County's intent is regarding enforcement. Since people change in government, there could be rules that are enforced differently based on the proposed language. Mayor Bennett noted that the Committee should be able to advance this today having Mr. Hulbert work with the County before bringing the Ordinance Amendments before Town Council.

Chairman Harkins asked if there were any other comments from the public. With none, he moved the item back to the dais. Mr. Ames made a motion to endorse the Amendment, subject to our Staff Attorney ironing out any ambiguities, and to move this forward to Town Council. Mayor Bennett seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.

#### **b. Presentation of the 2018 Fire Rescue Semi-Annual Report**

Chris Blankenship, Deputy Fire Chief, started the presentation with a slide presentation beginning with the response statistics from January to June 2018. Starting with Total Call Volume, there was an increase of 3.15%. They also had an uptick in January, seeing over the past 4 years the responses through the winter months on Hilton Head Island have been going up. After finishing the EMS statistics, Deputy Chief Blankenship spoke of the six major fire losses this year. The largest fire loss was the Crazy Crab Restaurant. Regarding the fire loss of Starbucks, Joheida Fister, Fire Marshal, indicated that the Fire Rescue and the insurance company were unable to make a determination on the actual cause. They indicated that the fire started in the electrical and the water heater area. Continuing on with the presentation,

Deputy Chief spoke of the Opioid epidemic. This was something Fire Rescue started looking to track in 2017. Mr. Harkins asked if they were involved in any education programs to alert the public of the hazards. EMS Chief Battalion, Tom Bouthillet, indicated that they attended an event in the High School which was led by a coalition of stakeholders, including people from public health department, state epidemiologist, and law enforcement. Chief Battalion Bouthillet indicated that Fire Rescue was very concerned about this problem last year and have focused on training for these emergencies to save the patient's life. They found throughout the year in Beaufort County the opioid epidemic requires a true disciplinary approach with law enforcement, at multiple levels, leading to good intercommunication between all offices. Deputy Chief Blankenship continued on with the presentation, noting the response times for Fire Rescue and EMS. These statistics are good but the departments are continuously trying to improving upon them. There have also been some departmental changes, including his promotion as well as others within Fire Rescue. There has been some

staff turnover, including some resignations, retirements and terminations. However, the team has been rounded out with additional new hires. Deputy Chief Blankenship went on to note several accomplishments, including a two-day leadership retreat guided by outside facilitators. All officers up and including the Chief participated with some great feedback. They completed Community Driven Strategic Planning Process and the final draft will be presented to Town Council in the near future. There have been new purchases, including replacing the thermos imaging cameras and an EMS tool used to suction airways. Currently, the department will have the first two new ambulances arriving in March of 2019 with two units expected every month for a total of 10 ambulances. The new E9 phones system, installed by Beaufort County, along with new portable radios purchased by Beaufort County are expected to be installed over the next few months. The new CAD- Computer Aided Dispatch is to be installed in January of 2019, which was funded 80% by E911 Phone Tax Funding with the remaining 20% by Fire Rescue normal operating costs. This year the department was awarded \$61,000 by the Homeland security grants to support the Hazmat team and \$68,000 to support the regional rescue team.

Mr. Ames noted that he is proud to be in a community with this level of service in its Fire Rescue department. But as a Town Councilman, he is often asked if we are spending more money than we need to with Total Operation. How does Fire Rescue balance those two things? Deputy Chief Blankenship explained that having the equipment and trucks break down diminishes their ability to serve the public. The needs and requests start at the company level, filtered through himself, and then given to Chief Tadlock for review. The Chief focuses on the direction of Fire Rescue as a whole, then takes any purchases to Steve for the final approval.

Further comments were solicited. Mayor Bennett and other citizens complimented Fire Rescue on their response, professionalism and approachable, friendly engagement with the community.

**c. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2018 Crime Statistics – Capt. Angela Viens**

Captain Angela Viens began the conversation about the Opioid epidemic. Beaufort County Sheriff's Office has partnered with Beaufort Memorial Hospital and placed drug drop boxes at their Hilton Head Office, the Bluffton and Beaufort courthouses. These boxes allow individuals to come in anonymously and drop off any prescription pills. These pills are then placed in a self-sealing bag, forwarded to the evidence facility where they are weighed and tracked. As was spoken earlier, BCSO partnered with Low Country Coalition of Heathy Youth, and presented at Hilton Head Island High School as well as Coligny Plaza and Coligny Beach area.

Captain Viens proceeded with the report, looking at the third quarter which is July, August and September. She started with the statistics for aggravated assaults and forcible rapes, which are down from last year. The robbery numbers are up as indicated on the map of the Island. The department has found that regarding robberies involving car break ins, owners become a little bit complacent with their personal effects. There are quite a number of vehicles with keys left inside and stolen. This figure coincides with gun thefts. There is a

large number of people leaving guns in their car overnight where they do not lock the car or lock the glove box. Most guns that find their way to the streets illegally are being taken through car break-ins. The Collisions are down from this quarter to last quarter across the board. In terms of technology, the officers have just received State Link, which gives them the ability to run drivers' license and vehicle registration in their patrol car. This cuts down on the turnaround time for traffic stops.

Captain Viens asked for any questions. Mr. Ames noted Reilley's Plaza, and Kangaroo Express with regards crimes against property. He questioned if these are alcohol related? The Captain indicated that looking across the board statistically, there will be a higher increase of crimes against persons in places that are populated with bars or similar venue.

With no further questions, Mr. Harkins thanked the Captain.

## 6. Adjournment

With no further business items, and no further items there was a motion for adjournment made by the Mayor. It was seconded by Mr. Ames. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM

Respectfully submitted:

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Phyllis Deiter  
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved on: 1/7/2019

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Bill Harkins, Chairman