



TOWN OF SURFSIDE BEACH
WAMPEE CONFERENCE CENTER, PINOPOLIS, SC
November 23, 2008

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Deaton called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m. Mayor Deaton, Mayor Pro Tem Truett and Councilmembers Johnson, Martin, Samples and Childs were present. Councilmember Blair was absent. A quorum was present. Staff present: Administrator Booth; Clerk Pinnell; Public Safety Director, Christenson; Fire Chief Packard; Public Works Director, Taylor; Recreation Supervisor, Ellis; Building & Zoning Director, Donevant and Finance Treasurer Hursey.

POLICE

Public Safety Director Christenson gave his presentation. Director Christenson went through the positions in his department reporting that there are 21 sworn Class I police officers. Each shift has a supervisor, a sergeant and two to three officers. Director Christenson reported that they have been working hard to cut overtime. Director Christenson stated that the average response time to a police call in the county is 13 to 15 minutes and in Surfside the response time is 15 seconds to one minute. The officers work alternating 12-hour shifts and he feels this is the most effective work schedule. Director Christenson reported that there are three people on the beach patrol and two work as beach patrol officers and work on the beach during the day and work 8 to 8 and the third would be the community services officer on the bicycle. They are trained in ocean water rescue and are EMT trained. There was some additional discussion as to how a 12-hour shift worked. They are also trained on the jet-ski and there is full documentation on all training. There are two detectives in investigations and one is assigned to the drug enforcement unit; there is one criminal detective; there are 6 people in communications including 4 dispatchers. Director Christenson explained their positions and job duties. Communications take care of phones, documentation and all communications. Director Christenson reported that Surfside Beach has arrested and brought through their facility 442 prisoners and Horry County has brought through 714 prisoners through their facility and South Carolina Highway Patrol and others have brought in 197. By law Surfside can only hold a prisoner for 6 hours and their transport officer takes the prisoner to J. Reuban Long Detention Center. Officer Walker was recruited and is used as transport officer and has 33 years experience. The training division takes care of all mandatory training and Director Christenson went through some of those. Director Christenson showed presentation of the cost to outfit an officer individually. The total cost for one uniform including weapons is \$5,029 and officers usually receive 2 additional shirts and pants. Director Christenson went over the police vehicles. They include 2 radar trailers, patrol cars, 2 new four wheelers, trailer and the old jet-ski that they will keep for another year or two. Director Christenson went through the breakdown of the vehicles. There are support vehicles, a new hybrid, beach patrol vehicles and a Ford Ranger truck, parking meter golf cart vehicles, and patrol vehicles. He is recommending that they replace one of the patrol vehicles. There are four cars sitting while 4 are being used adding that you need to give vehicles a break and there are times where there are 6 or 7 vehicles being used at once. They are in good shape as far as vehicles go. There are 9 patrol vehicles and the rest are support vehicles. The Dodge Durango gets the worst mileage and is utilized where it is driven the least. Director Christenson showed a photo of the new Hybrid. Director Christenson presented a report on various gangs in the area. Director Christenson showed some photos of a convicted felon they arrested in Surfside. Director Christenson stated that there is a lot of work to tagging items confiscated and documenting. Director Christenson went through the list of various calls the police go on including, burglaries, fights, assaults, animal calls, warrants served, civil matters, disturbances, beach

52 complaints, indecent exposures, suspicious circumstance calls, welfare concern checks, vehicle
53 accidents, information stops, intoxicated drivers, harassment calls, improper parking, speeding
54 tickets, driving under suspension, DUI's, stop sign violations, seat belt violations, open containers,
55 minor possession of alcohol, 911 hang ups, stolen property calls, medical calls, etc. It is an average
56 of 35 calls per day. The criminal investigator has opened 175 criminal cases in 9 months. Mr.
57 Johnson stated that he fees that the town needs more of a police presence on the beach. Director
58 Christenson stated that it takes an officer 2 to 2 and a half hours to go from one side of the beach to
59 the other and that is only if he is not stopped on a call and if an officer had to fill out an incident
60 report he would be taken away from the beach for awhile. Mayor Deaton stated that he agrees that
61 the town is looking for more of a presence to feel safe. Director Christenson stated that the new
62 community services officer would assist in giving this presence. Mr. Samples stated that if it takes
63 additional staff to provide a presence then he would suggest managing the priorities. Mr. Booth
64 stated that he would suggest hiring part time staff for this. Mr. Truett suggested having a south end
65 patrol and a north end patrol. Director Christenson stated that they have meter officers who could
66 work on the beach as a presence adding that the town would also need someone with the right
67 personality to serve as an ambassodor to the town.

68
69 **FIRE**

70 Chief Packard gave the fire department presentation and handed out a book to council. Chief
71 Packard reported that he depends greatly on his current staff and the town is fortunate to have
72 someone to do inspections, someone to take care of the inspections and an engineer. Chief Packard
73 showed photos of various calls the department had gone on and training photos. Chief Packard
74 presented the various costs to outfit a firefighter. Chief Packard reported that his truck was
75 replaced. Their trucks have been used on the beach with a stretcher and that the newest vehicle they
76 have is engine 1 which is a 2000 model. Engine 3 is a 1994 model and they also have a 1988 model
77 they would like to replace. He is recommending to replace engine 2 and ladder 4 since they were in
78 excess of 20 years old. Mr. Martin asked if anyone made actual beach accessible stretchers. It was
79 confirmed that they did not exist and that there were certain motorized stretchers that cost around
80 \$25,000. Director Christenson stated that the beach wheelchairs go for \$3,200 each. Chief Packard
81 stated that if council had any questions regarding the purchase of new fire trucks he could give
82 council contact names to call. Chief Packard provided information to council regarding the tax
83 exempt lease and proposal from Sovereign and the added benefits. Mayor Deaton stated that
84 council would review it and the town administrator would be visiting Florida to review options.
85 There was additional discussion regarding current debt and the time limitations on this proposal and
86 the procedures that the town would need to go through.

87
88 **BUILDING, PLANNING & ZONING**

89 Director Donevant stated that she would like to keep Mr. O'Quinn full time. The department has a
90 lot going on; they are planning on being more proactive with signage and trees and they are going
91 through their ordinances. Director Donevant reported that they have a lot of problems with people
92 placing things in the right-of-ways. Director Donevant stated that she tries not to get involved with
93 neighbor disputes and the town is trying to deal with these as they come up but they find it very
94 difficult to constantly go around and constantly check on right-of-ways. Mayor Deaton stated that
95 he agrees with staying out of neighbor disputes especially when it becomes a cost to the town. Ms.
96 Donevant stated that they have to follow their ordinances but once they remove something from a
97 right away someone brings up the fact that the town needs to take care of all of the other right-of-
98 ways. It was confirmed that the tree ordinance would be brought up in January. Mr. Booth reported
99 that they would also be discussing noise, lighting and painting that is part of the redevelopment of
100 17. Council decided that noise and light pollution, trees and signage are priorities and would be

101 discussed at the next workshop. Ms. Donevant stated that it is very difficult for her to do all of the
102 plan reviews and inspections and stressed that the building department was previously in bad shape
103 with all permits entered incorrectly; everything was entered as new construction and it has taken a
104 long time for them to straighten it out. Ms. Donevant stated that her department has been
105 concentrating on being friendlier and more approachable. Mayor Deaton stated that he feels that
106 people are beginning to get this message. Mr. Booth stated that he is concerned that the town has
107 passed ordinances without legal review and there may be consequences. Mayor Deaton stated that
108 he is concerned about the all of the trees coming down that should not be coming down. Ms.
109 Donevant stated that there are provisions that allow some trees to come down. Mr. Johnson stated
110 that he had requested legal review on ordinances in the past and is concerned that it did not get
111 done. Ms. Donevant stated that she feels the town is going in the right direction.

112 **PUBLIC WORKS**

114 Director Taylor asked if council had any questions or concerns that they needed addressed. Mr.
115 Booth reported that they plan on mapping the two lakes soon. His concern is how the lakes had
116 been managed and sprayed in the past. Director Taylor stated that they had removed nine
117 truckloads of algae and growth and that should not have been there if they been sprayed properly.
118 Mayor Deaton stated that he feels that the contractors were not spraying when they needed to. Mr.
119 Booth reported that the stormwater committee is very dedicated and that he likes committees.
120 There was some discussion as to the dredging of the lakes and the areas that have been seeded and
121 where grass has been replaced. Mayor Deaton stated that he has been hearing a lot of good
122 comments on the town in the last year. Mr. Childs stated that Director Taylor is very responsive to
123 all calls.

124
125 Mayor Deaton stated that Myrtle Beach has done a great job with their beach accesses and wanted
126 to make sure that Surfside was looking into the use of pervious and environmentally conscious
127 materials for upcoming projects as well. Mr. Booth and Director Taylor stated that they were; they
128 would be using these materials on the crossovers and the parking lots.

129 **FINANCE**

131 Treasurer of Finance Hursey reported that she has a good staff and everything is going well. Mayor
132 Deaton asked if the reimbursements process could be made simpler; it is currently very complicated
133 and that he would like the town to look into this. Mr. Booth stated that they could go to per diem
134 rates. Mayor Deaton stated that he is using his car a lot to attend various meetings. There was
135 additional discussion regarding the travel expenses.

136 **RECREATION**

138 Recreation Supervisor Ellis commented that she feels that this is the first council that actually
139 listens to staff. Ms. Ellis stated that she would like to get rid of football; it is the most expensive
140 sport to provide and requires police presence at times. Ms. Ellis reported that Horry County would
141 like to take over the football but their field would not be ready for another year so the options would
142 be to wait another year or have Horry County take it over and use the town's field. Mr. Truett
143 agreed that the town should allow Horry County to take over football and then the town could
144 concentrate on offering other programs adding that he would like to see the town keep it for another
145 year or if the town could convince Myrtle Beach to offer something at the Air Force Base. Mayor
146 Deaton stated that he did not think that Myrtle Beach would provide this. Mr. Truett stated that
147 perhaps the town could cut down the size of the football and not eliminate it. Mayor Deaton stated
148 that he would be shocked if the County even had it ready for the following season. It was discussed
149 that Carolina Forest bumped the previous Scipio Lane project. There was additional discussion

150 regarding previous negotiations and Mr. Samples stated that he feels that the concern is that the
151 County would not “step up to the plate”. Mr. Booth stated that the proposal was for the County to
152 take over the football and Mr. Truett does not want to see Horry County or anyone else coming into
153 our town and managing the program and using our field. Ms. Ellis stated that the next question
154 would be do we charge the County? Do we supply staff to assist? Do they use our equipment? Do
155 we rent it to them? Mayor Deaton stated that the County does not have a lot of experience in
156 running sports programs. Mr. Truett stated that perhaps we could report to the parents that we
157 would not be providing football next year and that the County would be; it would then be on the
158 County to provide it. Mayor Deaton stated that we can put it on the County and that the town
159 should downsize the program if that is what we are comfortable with doing. Mr. Truett added that
160 we could then add a program like soccer. Mr. Truett made a recommendation to continue the
161 football program for one more year but to make it clear that this would be the last year and then to
162 perhaps downsize the football league so that we could use other facilities like Martin Park for
163 soccer for 5 to 8 year olds. Mr. Martin seconded the recommendation. All of council in attendance
164 agreed to the recommendation. Ms. Ellis reported that the recent Family Festival was the best the
165 town has ever had. Ms. Ellis stated that they have two floats and suggested that she use a float for
166 employees and their kids. There was no objection from council. The recommendation previously
167 made from Mr. PL Mabry to add a sign on the recycling truck to show how many tons has been
168 recycled and how much is saved the town was discussed for the parade. Ms. Hursey suggested we
169 contact someone from Solid Waste to walk next to the garbage truck in the parade and perhaps they
170 can send their mascot. Ms. Ellis stated that a banner to go across Surfside Drive costs \$3,000 and
171 there is only a 1.5 second period to read a banner. It was discussed that she can use \$600 and get
172 banners put at each corner and feels that this is the better way to go than the large banner on
173 Surfside Drive. Mayor Deaton stated that he is not a fan of banners. Council agreed that they
174 would not use a banner on Surfside Drive and there were other ways to go.

BUSINESS

176
177 There was discussion regarding cost of living and merit increases. Mr. Truett stated that he agrees to
178 a 4 percent cost of living with no merit increase. Mayor Deaton recommended to suspend the merit
179 increase for one year and get a fire truck. Mr. Samples recommended to approve a 3.5 percent cost
180 of living raise and to suspend the merit increase. Mr. Martin disagreed; he agreed to 3 percent cost
181 of living and strongly believes in giving merit increases and feels this is the best financial way to
182 reward staff. Mr. Martin stated that purchasing a fire truck would not cost the town anything for 3
183 years and feels that this is not an issue. Mr. Martin stated that he feels that it is very important to
184 keep good people. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Childs agreed to suspend the merit increase for one year.
185 Mr. Truett stated that job security is very important and that even during these economic times
186 council is saying that they are agreeing to give a cost of living raise and it shows that they are
187 appreciated adding that the turnover ratio has gone down quite a bit. Mr. Truett stated that he is
188 always for giving merit increases and will be more than happy to give them once the economy
189 comes back. Ms. Hursey stated that it was also brought up about the idea to review the towns
190 position after 6 months and if there was a surplus then the town could establish a bonus pool that
191 would be a one time bonus. Ms. Hursey stated that the insurance did go up so the 3 percent increase
192 would be a wash to employees. Mayor Deaton stated that it is important to be good stewards of the
193 town’s money and this is not a time where they can authorize excess spending. Ms. Ellis stated that
194 she agrees that the increase across the board during economic times would go over well and agreed
195 that if it were possible to establish a bonus pool then that would just be a plus. **Council was in**
196 **consensus to 3.5 percent cost of living and no merit increase for one budget cycle with**
197 **possibility of bonus pool.**

198

199 **Police Car** – there was consensus from council on this purchase

200

201 **Sanitation Truck** – There was consensus on this purchase

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203 **Pickup Truck** – There was consensus of council

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205 **Front Loader** – There was consensus of council

206

207 **Pier Fees** to allow residents to walk free and 50 percent off for permanent residents

208

209 **Establish Season pass for parking in Yaupon.** Mayor Deaton stated that this needs to be bundled
210 with other parking. It was agreed that an analysis would need to be done and brought back to
211 council.

212

213 There was discussion regarding maintenance on the pier. Mr. Booth reported that the town is
214 currently performing mandatory maintenance. They are replacing bulbs and doing some redecking
215 and putting in benches.

216

217 There was some discussion regarding collecting fees at the pier off-season and the contract in place
218 with the tenant. Council recommended that the administrator have attorney Mr. Smith review this
219 issue. Mr. Booth reported that the gift shop tenant would like the town to buy his lease out and it
220 would be the decision of council. Mr. Martin asked if the town rest room in the parking lot by the
221 pier could be supplied with electric to heat the pipes so that it could be open year round once the
222 underground wiring is done in that area. Director Taylor agreed that this would be possible. Mr.
223 Childs asked who would make the announcement about the pier fees. Ms. Hursey reported that the
224 attorney would need to look at both leases in full and review the possible loss of income to the
225 tenant from residents not paying, he was previously paying a portion of the property taxes that
226 totaled approximately \$7,000 and he no longer has that which is another issue to consider. Mr.
227 Booth reported that it would all be in place by February. Mr. Booth stated that he would have
228 someone in place to see what the interest is during that period. Mr. Johnson asked if all of the lights
229 would be removed. Mr. Booth stated that he is studying other piers to see how they work best. Mr.
230 Booth stated that there are currently lights at the end of the pier that are currently not working and
231 they are looking at getting them working again. Mayor Deaton stated that the town needs to make
232 sure the lights do not effect the turtles. The light confuses them.

233

234 **Comp Time to 48 hours and changing vacation, sick time to personal time** – There was
235 consensus of council

236

237 Mr. Childs stated that he hopes that before the town tackles large projects it should look into using a
238 planner. Mr. Booth reported that the town already has some plans in place and the town needs to
239 realize that planners would use up most of the budget; they are costly. It was agreed that the COG
240 could also assist. Mr. Samples stated that the town needs some sort of plan and he would like to see
241 the town use some of the previous plans presented. The 12-month and 15 month budget were
242 discussed and Ms. Hursey asked for consensus on what budget to prepare. Mr. Samples stated that
243 he is concerned that the budget would be prepared by one council and approved by possibly a new
244 council who had no part in the original budget meeting or decisions made. Mayor Deaton stated
245 that he sees not problem in placing the town in line with other communities and the State. Mr.
246 Truett made a motion to go with the 15 month budget. This would change the fiscal year end. Mr.

247 Martin seconded the motion. Mr. Samples and Mr. Childs were opposed. Mayor Deaton, Mr.
248 Johnson, Mr. Martin and Mr. Truett were for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

249
250 Mr. Truett stated that he would like to see benches installed on every other crossover. It would give
251 people a place to sit and view the ocean and sunset. Mr. Childs agreed that it was a good idea.
252 There was a discussion regarding permits needed and that Mr. Taylor would look into this.

253
254 Mr. Johnson thanked the employees and other councilmembers added their thanks to the employees.

255
256 **ADJOURNMENT**

257 Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM

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261 Approved: February 10, 2009

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264 _____
265 Sharon Pinnell, Town Clerk

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270 K. Allen Deaton, Mayor Joseph P. Martin, Town Council

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275 Vicki W. Blair, Town Council James S. Truett, Mayor Pro Tem

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280 Douglas F. Samples, Town Council Mark L. Johnson, Town Council

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285 Robert F. Childs, III, Town Council

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288 **Clerk's Note: This document constitutes minutes of the meeting, which was audio taped. In accordance with FOIA, meeting notice and the**
289 **agenda were faxed and/or emailed to local media and interested parties. A complete list is on file in the clerk's office. The agenda was posted**
290 **on bulletin boards outside Council chambers and in the town hall reception area. Meeting notice was also posted on the town marquee.**