

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**

**Date:** April 6, 2009

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** George Williams, *Acting Chairman*, Bill Ferguson, Ken Heitzke, *Alternate*

**Members Absent:** None

**Town Staff Present:** Steve Riley, *Town Manager*; Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*; Lavarn Lucas, *Fire Chief*; Tom Fultz, *Director of Administrative Services*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; Ed Boring, *Deputy Fire Chief*; Mick Mayers, Paul Rasch, *Emergency Services Coordinator*; David Cooler, *Administrative Battalion Chief*; Captain Randy Lindstrom, Lt. David Britton, Lt. Chris Blankenship, Lt. Jason Walters, FAD David Metz, FAD Jeff Weber, FAD Colin Fanning, FF Jonathan Bius, FF Jason Lee, *Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue*; Susan Williams, *Communications Supervisor*

**Others Present:** Lieutenant Glenn Zanelotti, *BCSO*

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

**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

**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. Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Heitzke moved to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2009. Mr. Ferguson seconded the motion. Mr. Heitzke noted one correction needed. He stated the meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. as opposed to 10:00 a.m. The Minutes of March 9, 2009 were approved unanimously as corrected.

**4. Chairman's Report:**

None.

**5. Unfinished Business:**

None.

**6. New Business:**

- **4th Quarter 2008 Crime Statistics** – Lieutenant Glenn Zanelotti, BCSO

**Crimes Against Persons**

Lieutenant Zanelotti stated overall there was 10% decrease as compared to the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2007. He explained there was a slight increase in robberies and attributed it to the holiday

season. Lieutenant Zanelotti also noted the decrease in Criminal Domestic Violence stating the department was pleased to see such. He reviewed the Crimes Against Persons Comparison by Area and pointed out the decrease in Mathews Drive/Dillon Road Area and Spanish Wells Road/Marshland Road Area. He explained they have been targeting those areas for surveillance and it has been successful. Lieutenant Zanelotti pointed out the increase in the Crimes Against Persons in Plantations noting of the eight reported assaults one of them was a false report. Mr. Williams asked about the increase in Hilton Head Plantation.

### **Crimes Against Property**

Lieutenant Zanelotti reported there was a 3% increase from the previous year. He explained a group juveniles were arrested for the crimes in Hilton Head Plantation. He stated these were mostly crimes of opportunity with doors unlocked and items of value in plain sight. He also pointed out there was a decrease in Petit Larceny. Lieutenant Zanelotti stated the department is working on areas hit hardest with additional surveillance.

### **Vehicle Collisions**

Lieutenant Zanelotti reviewed the Vehicle Collisions stating they are down 14% and they are very pleased.

### **Tickets**

Lieutenant Zanelotti stated Traffic Tickets are slightly down but attributed it to the decrease in Vehicle Collisions.

### **Drug Violations**

Lieutenant Zanelotti reviewed the Drug Violations with the Committee.

Mr. Williams asked Lieutenant Zanelotti to address the situation concerning the bar scene. Lieutenant Zanelotti explained he had been out of town for training for the past two months and did not have an update on the situation. Mr. Williams asked if he would let Captain McSwain know the Committee would like an update at the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Williams thanked Lieutenant Zanelotti for his report.

- **Fire and Rescue Response Standards**

Steve Riley referred to the two memos included in the packet for the meeting. He stated one was a general overview of the Response Standards Issue and the other is a more detailed memo specific to the request for additional staff. He explained last year there was discussion as to where the Town is concerning the Second Ladder Company and Response Standards. He noted the Chief expressed his concerns about a series of incidents this past summer with storms which required back-up from other areas. Mr. Riley stated he is looking at a budget which is \$2 million dollars out of balance and while he understands Chief Lucas's concern, he doesn't see how he can fund the staff without making significant changes in how we do business as a Town. Mr. Riley stated that with recent budget reductions and elimination of several staff positions, he cannot recommend, at this time, that Council fund this proposal. He explained with accepting the SAFER grant all costs would not be covered. We would also be

raising our minimum daily threshold of required staff on hand and overtime costs would increase due to vacations, sick time and other absences.

Chief Lavarn Lucas approached the dais. He explained the Town was awarded a SAFER grant from the Department of Homeland Security. This would require them to hire nine additional firefighters. The Town must notify them by April 15, 2009 that it intends to accept or deny the grant award. He also noted the Town would have to keep these nine staff members throughout the life of the grant plus one additional year. He said they need to have an answer and respond by the deadline so they will not be blacklisted for consideration of any future grants. As long as the Town responds by the deadline and even if the Town does not accept the grant, the Town will maintain eligibility to apply for future grants.

Chief Lucas explained in detail the Fire & Rescue Response Standards, staffing at the stations and the concerns when units are out and not available. He reviewed all Fire/EMS calls and current staffing along with the minimums and maximums at each station. Chief Lucas also answered questions from the Committee concerning call procedures. He reviewed response times and percentages noting they are close to the Master Plan requirement of arrival in five minutes 90% of the time. He reported first arriving EMS units are arriving 86.17% of the time. He explained with the Fire Emergencies the units are arriving in 83.45% of the time. He also stated they will be updating the Master Plan this coming year and will be able to come back to the Committee with recommendations to improve response time. He explained with the additional nine staff members they could improve response times, as well as not leaving a unit unmanned.

Mr. Ferguson stated he has a problem turning down grant funding when it is awarded. He also asked if Town Council chooses not to accept the grant can it be applied for at a later time. Mr. Heitzke stated you have to be careful accepting these types of grants because the cost requirement placed on the Town could be quite a burden because after four years the Town would be responsible for 100%. Chief Lucas stated he fully understood the Town Manager's concern about the grant. He said he realized the grant is not free and funds would need appropriated. He informed the Committee the SAFER Grant as been around for a number of years and as long as they are notified before April 15 as to whether we are accepting it or not, the Town would be eligible to apply again at a future date. Mr. Heitzke asked why nine positions were applied for. Chief Lucas explained after rearranging existing staffing and with the nine positions it would assure there were no station closures during emergencies.

Mr. Ferguson asked about the feasibility of appropriating additional ATAX funds to cover the costs due to the fact tourism has such an impact on our emergency calls. Mr. Riley approached the dais and explained the Town has utilized those resources. He said if they take any more, other organizations would lose funding. He also noted with tourism down the available funds are limited.

At 11:15 a.m., Mr. Ferguson announced due to a prior commitment he had to excuse himself from the meeting.

Mr. Heitzke asked if this grant was a continuing process with the Department of Homeland Security or if it is a one time grant. Chief Lucas explained it was an annual grant and this grant was for 2008 which required matching funds from the Town. Because of the stimulus bill the grant is available in the next two years with no matching funds required and if they would apply for them and be awarded the grant, the Town would not have to match any funding. He emphasized the need to respond by April 15, 2009 so the Town would not be blacklisted for future grants. He also informed the Committee there are other communities that have had to back away from the funding this year due to the requirement of matching funds.

After lengthy discussion, Mr. Heitzke moved to recommend Town Council not accept the SAFER grant this year. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0.

**7. Adjournment:**

Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Williams seconded the Motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Vicki L. Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

Approved by:

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George Williams, Acting Chairman