

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: June 4, 2012

Time: 10:03 a.m.

Members Present: Bill Harkins, *Chairman*; Lee Edwards, *Council Member*

Members Absent: Kim Likins, *Council Member*

Town Staff Present: Lavarn Lucas, *Fire Chief*; Ed Boring, *Deputy Fire Chief*; Brad Tadlock, *Deputy Fire Chief*; Randy Lindstrom, *Administrative Battalion Chief*; Cathy Jones-Gooding, *Communications Manager*; Darrin Shoemaker, *Traffic & Transportation Engineer*; and Lynn Buchman, *Administrative Assistant*

Others Present: Ken Heitzke, *Council Member*; Julie Bell; and Eleanor O'Key, *LowCountry Inside Track*

Media Present: Allison Stice, *The Island Packet*

1. Call to Order

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. Regular Public Safety Committee Meeting of May 7, 2012

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2012 Regular Public Safety Committee meeting was made by Lee Edwards and seconded by Bill Harkins. The Motion was approved by a vote of 2-0.

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

a. Community Awareness of Teenage Access, Use, and Abuse of Alcohol – Julie Bell

Chairman Harkins welcomed Julie Bell and recognized that our community, like many other communities, is not immune to the issue of teenage alcohol use. Through the leadership of Julie and other community leaders, there is an effort underway that we, as a community, need to learn about and help to promote in the future.

Julie Bell explained that the group called The Lowcountry Alliance for Health Youth Uniting the Community to Promote Positive Choices has a mission to bring together all sectors of our community to identify and implement strategies that promote positive youth development by addressing substance use and abuse and related risk behaviors. The newly formed group is mirrored after two successful organizations and is focusing its efforts specifically to Hilton Head Island at this time. She outlined the organization's progress in setting up a 501(c)(3) to solicit funds, and the survey planned in August of 8th to 12th grade students in order to establish the need in the community for such a program. While it is believed that alcohol is a problem in the community, the survey is designed to identify if that is the case or whether other risk behavior problems, such as drugs, may exist. She stressed that the program was designed to assess the needs of students on Hilton Head Island and use that knowledge to encourage and promote healthier choices. Plans to establish a "party line" or tip line with the Beaufort County Sheriff's Department were discussed to inform parents of the responsibilities they carry when alcohol is present on their property, either on purpose or by accident. Ms. Bell cited plans to establish a Board comprised of law enforcement, clergy, Chamber of Commerce officials, real estate, government, and parents to advise and guide the group.

In response to questions from Chairman Harkins and Mr. Edwards, Ms. Bell explained the survey process that will be utilized through the schools and how the resulting data obtained in early fall can be used for Federal, State, and local grant and funding requests. Ms. Bell noted the survey may determine there is no problem, but she stressed that this group consisting of volunteers is simply trying to help the community. Chairman Harkins noted that the proactive leadership role being taken should be viewed as positive for the Town, and Mr. Edwards concurred. Chairman Harkins encouraged Ms. Bell to share successful programs in other areas with local leaders and the press. Chairman Harkins and Mr. Edwards thanked Ms. Bell for her efforts and for appearing before the Committee, and asked her to keep the Committee advised.

b. Hilton Head Island Fire and Rescue 2011 Annual Report

Chief Lavarn Lucas reviewed the 2011 Fire and Rescue Annual Report in detail through a PowerPoint presentation. Noting that the mission of Fire and Rescue had not changed, he highlighted the activities, accomplishments, and future plans to improve services and capabilities. Senior leadership and changes to the organizational chart were identified, equipment and facilities outlined, noteworthy 2011 accomplishments reviewed, and changes anticipated in Fiscal Year 2012 noted. Detailed operational statistics and fire incident types were reported, with Battalion Chief Lindstrom explaining what was included in the various types and categories. The Committee members asked for clarification on certain points and Chief Lucas provided additional details as requested. Mr. Edwards thanked Chief Lucas for the thorough report, and Chairman Harkins congratulated the Chief, his Assistant Fire Chiefs, and colleagues on a very successful year filled with challenges and expressed the appreciation of the Town for the level of professionalism and ongoing training shown, and the gratitude of the public that is very well served.

c. 911 Cell Phone Errors

Chief Lucas introduced Cathy Jones-Gooding, Communications Manager for the Dispatch Center, to present for informational purposes only, a report on the ongoing attempts to reduce the cell phone E-911 errors, which he pointed out is an item on the Management Agenda 2012 developed during the 2011 retreat. He noted that the hard-wired system is working well with

few errors, but the cell phone age has brought with it new errors. He reported that although Beaufort County has assumed the responsibility for correcting errors reported, very limited corrective action has been taken by them. FCC intervention was also ruled out as ineffective, so a process of direct communication with the individual cell carriers is being undertaken.

Cathy Jones-Gooding explained in detail through a PowerPoint presentation exactly how the basic system works technically, the various 911 errors for landlines and wireless, and what efforts have been undertaken to correct those errors. Possible solutions to the problems included adding more towers, reminding people to update their cell phones regularly, and the technology improvements being made. The Committee members interjected questions during the presentation, and Ms. Gooding provided additional details in response. Chief Lucas gave additional examples of various 911 errors and noted the complexity of finding solutions. Chairman Harkins agreed with Chief Lucas that this was not a simple situation, but noted that as we look forward we definitely want improvements, and asked for a summary of key action items to be taken at the County, Town, technical resource, and consumer levels. Chief Lucas noted that the most beneficial would be for Beaufort County to first accept there is a problem and be willing to be aggressive with the cell phone carriers about correcting the problems. Until that occurs, a direct involvement with the cell phone carriers may be needed to convince them there is a problem. Education of the public as to updating individual cell phones is also important, as well as encouraging their use of landlines as a first option for placing 911 calls and identifying the community location and address of the caller. Chairman Harkins noted there was a lot of responsibility in this evolving technology that still remains at county and town government, technical, and consumer levels. Chief Lucas agreed and expressed concerns that voice-over IP (internet protocol) would complicate the 911 problem even more and explained the growing market for Vonage and Magic Jack using the internet to make phone calls and the routing, delays, and address problems associated with its use.

Chairman Harkins thanked Chief Lucas and Ms. Gooding and noted the need to encourage our Beaufort County colleagues to work closely with the Town, among other things, to improve the situation.

d. Discussion of July Meeting Date

Chairman Harkins and Mr. Edwards discussed a July meeting date, and it was decided to cancel the regularly scheduled meeting for July 2, 2012.

Adjournment

At 11:52 a.m. Mr. Edwards moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Harkins seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 2-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn W. Buchman
Administrative Assistant

Approved: 8/6/2012

Bill Harkins, Chairman