

MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds and James Broderick. (NOTE: Vacant seat remains due to passing of Councilman Randy Peters). Interim City Manager Jim Duckett, City Clerk Betty Hudson, and City Attorney George Cone along with Clenton Campbell, were also present. There were approximately 38 persons present in the audience.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. Council Member Lohr led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

The Mayor reminded everyone of the "Polo for the Point" Event to be held this Sunday, at the Limehouse Farms. This is a benefit event for the Colleton Center. It begins at 12:00 noon and the first event is at 2:00 P.M.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

No public comments or questions were received.

PRESENTATION:

1. **Results of ICMA Study on Public Safety Department**, - Mr. Leonard Matarese.

Mr. Leonard Matarese and Mr. Joe Pozzo of ICMA were present to provide a final report of ICMA analysis of the Walterboro Public Safety Department.

Mr. Matarese reported that his staff spent 12 man-days on the ground and conducted a large public meeting. In addition, there was backroom work that was very extensive, as you see the report with regard to data analysis and a series of comprehensive recommendations. He said, we are really pleased with the report and hope that you are as well.

Mr. Matarese stated that ICMA is the International City County Management Association, which is a 100-year-old professional association of public administrators headquartered in Washington, D.C. There are about 9,000 members in 32 counties around the world. Next year will be our 100th anniversary. He said, since the beginning of the organization, we have been engaged in working closely with elected officials and public administrators in advancing the services that government provides to its citizens. ICMA is involved in all kinds of activities of local government from parks, recreation, libraries, economic development, public works facilities, etc. We have people who work in those areas, not only in the United States, but around the world. We do an extensive amount of work with the United States' state departments and USAID.

One of the areas that we focus on is the area of public safety (police, fire and EMS). We do a wide range of activities there from training to research. We have done over 200 public safety studies over the past 6 years. We do a lot of consultation with local governments.

Mr. Matarese informed Council that his firm did a very comprehensive analysis of the Walterboro Public Safety Department. We found that there are significant improvements that can be achieved in the agency. We identified some important issues that I would like to highlight. We made 54 recommendations, and I will just highlight some of those major recommendations.

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Mr. Matarese then gave the important highlights of his findings for the public safety department, specifically, he noted that:

ICMA found that there are major improvements that should be made in the manner in which public safety services are delivered in Walterboro. Critical areas the ICMA team identified that need improvement and that resulted in recommendations are: significant human resource administrative and process deficiencies need to be corrected; the department has not completed a comprehensive strategic plan or community risk assessment; the department has a limited performance measurement system in place; there are administrative and operational inefficiencies that reduce the effectiveness of the public safety officer's concept; the agency lacks current and succinct agency policies and procedures; and there are a number of agency-wide administrative and operational deficiencies and areas that need improvement.

We found that this agency is in urgent need of highly skilled leadership, experienced in the public safety concept, who can instill a vision in the agency built around a deep commitment to protect the citizens of the city. Members of the agency working hard to meet the needs of the community do not receive sufficient support or guidance. There is an absence of standard processes for recruitment, promotion, discipline or recognition of service or exemplary performance. The agency fails to train its personnel adequately. In total, these shortcomings send a very poor message to the staff sworn to protect the community. Even physical conditions kind of speak out. One of the issues that we identified in the report is that there is not even a single sign that says "The Public Safety Department is housed in this building" or anywhere in this area. I have never been to a city where you can't identify the police department by its signs. The fire department has signage, but the police department does not.

Mr. Matarese noted that the report contains 54 recommendations as a result of their findings. He briefly summarized most of these recommendations. A full copy of these recommendations can be found in their booklet entitled "Public Safety Department Analysis, Walterboro, South Carolina July 2013, ICMA Center for Public Safety Management."

During his discussion on the recommendations for the public safety department, Mr. Matarese said, one of the things that we did find that we were very pleased to see and something that your detectives should be very proud of is: They have a very high clearance rate compared to the state averages and national averages. So, they are doing really a good job in solving cases and they should be recognized for doing that.

Mr. Joe Pozzo then reported on the findings for the fire side. Mr. Pozzo stated that his observation of the public safety department was that it lacks the basic fundamentals and characteristics of what a public safety organization should be. It was formed a number of years ago, and we think after it was formed, there were some things that were not put into place. Things just were not put in place and carried out. But when you look at the fire side of it, that is certainly the case. I think the fire part of this got put over to the side when the public safety department was organized. The staffing that was put in place on the patrol side does not meet the objectives of a public safety department. Mr. Pozzo then gave a brief report of their findings with recommendations for improvements.

In the processing of giving his report, Mr. Pozzo pointed out that one of the wisest things that (the City) can do immediately is to go to a central communications system. The Colleton County Emergency Base Center has a sophisticated computer-aided dispatch. I watched how they processed calls and what they do. It's very sophisticated, because all of the information is in there.

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In conclusion, Mr. Pozzo said, I think we have given you some solid recommendations in this report on how to be more effective. One of the most critical pieces here is getting the right leadership in place that understands what a public safety department is, if your choice is to maintain that model.

Concluding the report, Mr. Matarese spoke on the "Crime report" on page 41 of the booklet. He stated, on Table 5: 2011 UCR Crime Comparisons, it shows that in 2011 Walterboro had a uniform crime report, part 1 Violent Crime Rate of 916 violent crimes and a property crime rate of 11,994 per 100,000 residents. The violent crime rate in Walterboro is 69% higher than the state average and 237%, more than double higher than the national average. The rate of property crime is 307% higher than the state average (more than triple), and 412% higher than the national average (4 times greater). Walterboro has the highest property crime rate and the 2nd lowest violent crime rate of all the jurisdictions shown in the table. What we did with this table was to look at other cities in South Carolina with approximately the same population. We are not suggesting that you compare completely with those cities, because you are a county seat, with a lot of business activity here. A lot of people come into the community from outside the community, but I think it does give you a sense of what the issues are in terms of crime.

He stated, essentially over the past ten years, the rate of crime in Walterboro has fluctuated. Violent crime reached a high in 2003, and appears to be trending downward since 2008. Similarly, property crime in Walterboro has fluctuated over the decade with alternating high and low periods. I will remind you that crime throughout the country is decreasing in many places at a much faster rate.

You, as an elected official, need to see on a regular basis the reports having to do with these benchmarks and some other benchmarks that you may wish to add, and it should be the responsibility for the next City Manager and the next Public Safety Director to share that information with you on a regular basis, so that you can provide the oversight and policy setting responsibilities that you have as elected officials.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

The Minutes of the October 8, 2013 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved as submitted on the motion of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed with all members voting in favor.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Ordinance # 2013-11**, An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Walterboro to Join with the Walterboro - Colleton County Airport Commission and the County of Colleton in Waiving a Right of First Refusal to Purchase Eight (8) Acres, More or Less, of Land in Connection with the Sale of the Land by Marketing Services International, LLC to Universal Distributors, LLC, **Second Reading**.

A motion was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Broderick giving Second Reading and Adoption to Ordinance # 2013-11 as submitted. In discussing the motion, Council Member Siegel reminded that there was a previous discussion on the issue, and the question was: Is this a waiver only for this transaction or was this a release of the first right of refusal by the Commission? Mayor Young responded that this was a waiver only for this transaction, and that's what the County is doing also.

The motion then passed unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request to Close Streets from 8:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. for First Annual Santa Sprint and 5K Run and Use of City Parking Lot from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. on December 7, 2013 by Colleton County Arts Council

A motion granting this request as submitted was made upon motion of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously.

2. Request to Close Streets from 6:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. for the Oyster Roast/Crab Crack Fund-raising Event on November 23, 2013 by CTS/CHS Alumni Association, Inc.

A motion was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Broderick, to approve the street closing request (for Gruber Street) as submitted by the CTS/CHS Alumni Association. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

3. Designation of Voting Delegate and Alternate for the NLC Congress of Cities and Exposition in Seattle, Washington November 13-16, 2013

Council Member Lohr nominated Council Member Broderick as the voting delegate and Mayor Young as the alternate voting delegate. Council Member Bonds seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. There were no Committee Reports given.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Bonds and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:05 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: January 14, 2014