

Aiken City Council Minutes
WORK SESSION

December 17, 2014

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, and Councilmembers Dewar, Diggs, Homoki, Merry, and Price.

Absent: Councilmember Ebner.

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Kim Abney, Sara Ridout, Charles Barranco, Phil Kestin, Brian Brazier, David Turno, Ron Shelley, Marty Sawyer, Ben Harm MaryAnn Burgess, Jennifer Bickle, and Maayan Schechter of the Aiken Standard.

BUDGET

Mayor Fred Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and review the Public Safety Department budget.

Interim City Manager Roger LeDuc stated that at the last meeting we talked about a number of different things, primarily Administration and Patrol at Public Safety. He would like to start the meeting with Chief Charles Barranco going over a couple of positions they have vacant and what they will probably be proposing in the next budget and why. He stated they are still trying to identify other areas, but these particular two need to be identified.

Chief Barranco stated he feels there will be a very positive report from last week. CALEA was in town and some of Council spoke with them. Public Safety received a very good review. Nothing is officially back yet, but once it is, Chief Barranco stated he will pass it on to Council. He stated the positions being talked about are a lieutenant in the Fire Division (2120) and a Crime Prevention Officer (2110). He said these positions are vacant now, and they feel that they can, with some adjustment in the Fire Division, be able to eliminate those positions. They now have two other Driver Operator positions that will give some relief in the Fire Department. It will allow some of the Sergeants to do some of the administrative function. They can take up the slack of the lieutenant position. When it was filled, it was being pulled in a bunch of different directions on some computer stuff and other issues. He feels that can be moved around. As far as the Crime Prevention position, 2142, our Community Services Division is doing the majority of crime prevention anyway so this could be absorbed into 2142. In doing away with two sworn positions and looking at depreciation for two vehicles over the next couple of years as they depreciate, we feel that we can save approximately \$110,000 in salaries and \$50,000 for not having to depreciate and replace those vehicles. That is one of the areas of cost savings. He stated he heard from the last meeting that Council was looking at more cost savings, and that is what they wanted to propose at this meeting. Along with that they are considering reclassifying a position in 2150 which is Support Services. That position would be reclassified from a sworn position to a non-sworn position and then focus on some of the responsibilities there and with IT. We have talked about having server space in the Cloud and some capital projects with the records management system that need to be changed over. In talking with Angela Hales, she has said many times she needs a lot of help at Public Safety. He feels with a reclassification of this position from a sworn to a non-sworn position, elimination of an assigned vehicle which will not be needed anymore, and a reduction in the salary will also help with the budget.

Councilman Dick Dewar asked who was in the position currently. Chief Barranco stated Eddie George. Councilwoman Lessie Price asked if Mr. George was leaving. Chief Barranco stated he does not want to leave. He is looking at some options on a personal level. Councilwoman Gail Diggs asked if anyone was running him off. Chief Barranco stated not at all. Councilman Steve Homoki stated if positions were reclassified from a sworn to a non-sworn position would those positions fall under the Public Safety retirement system or under the normal City system. Chief Barranco stated currently they are in the Police Officers' Retirement System. If they are reclassified, that will change.

Councilwoman Price asked what job Eddie George held. Chief Barranco stated currently he is the Electrical Operations Supervisor, and it may be something that we can look at reclassifying, maybe with him in that position, and stay within Public Safety, but with more of an IT focus. He pointed out all the concerns that were talked about at the last meeting – upcoming body cams, server space, transition in the radio system, the upkeep of the mobile data terminals, etc. Councilwoman Price asked if Mr. George's salary would be reduced. Chief Barranco stated there are some options there. Mr. LeDuc stated Mr. George could retire in the Public Safety system because he has the years to do so. Councilwoman Diggs asked if that was his plan. Chief Barranco stated they have talked to Mr. George about it, and he is very open. This is in the preliminary stages. Mr. LeDuc stated he could be rehired. An example of this is Mike Jordan and Tommy Paradise. They retired from the Public Safety system, and then they were rehired by the City in a different role. They are drawing retirement check, plus they are getting paid what the City pays them. He stated it would be like if you were in the military for 20 years, and you leave and get a civilian job. This is all confidential because nothing has been developed, but he could retire and be rehired in a different role.

Councilwoman Price asked if Mr. George's salary would be reduced in the current job with him still in the position. Mr. LeDuc stated yes. Councilwoman Price asked if his performance dictates that. Mr. LeDuc stated it would be in a different role than he is currently in. He would not be a certified officer any more. Chief Barranco stated he would not be supervising anybody, and he is currently a supervisor. Councilwoman Price stated the City has changed scope with other people and reduced their scope of work. She expressed concerned about taking \$10,000 from a man's livelihood. Mr. LeDuc stated he would be drawing a large retirement check. Councilwoman Price asked if he was retiring. Chief Barranco stated they have been in preliminary discussions with him and wanted to bring the options to Council. Councilwoman Price stated the reason she is asking the question is because if he is not retired and still in the same job, she has an issue with dropping someone's salary. She stated if he has elected to retire and wants to go on another system then that is up to staff to negotiate. Mr. LeDuc stated it would be like rehiring the former City Manager.

Captain Brian Brazier stated he was going to talk about the Fire Division and the current staffing levels. There is a sergeant on each shift and currently six driver/operators per shift which basically means there is one driver for every truck that is on duty that is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. He stated they are working with minimum staffing currently. The full-time staff includes him as the Captain, three sergeants, and since Council has generously unfrozen two positions, they have 20 driver/operator positions available. Currently they only have 18 in place. There are six Public Safety Cadets and 17 volunteer fireman slots who are stipend volunteers. They actually only have six or seven in place. They receive a very minimum amount of money every two weeks to help with gas. He stated the list of vehicles is quite extensive. They have six engines. Currently they only have one reserve truck which is a ghost vehicle now. Several years ago they had two reserve trucks, and there were a lot of mechanical issues with them. They had to get rid of them for liability reasons. They would not stop. The brakes were so bad they would not stop. The one reserve engine they have now is used quite a bit. If they were to have two trucks go down, they would have a station without a fire engine in it. He said that is something Council needs to be aware of. Mr. LeDuc stated he has worked with a number of other communities. He pointed out the City only has six or seven volunteers. He asked why the City cannot get more volunteers. Captain Brazier stated it is hard to get commitment from people. Mr. LeDuc asked if it was the money the city gives them. He asked if it would be better to give them so much for every fire they fight or the training instead of a stipend. He stated Trenton has 200 people living there and 20 fire volunteers. Edgefield has 30 and New Ellenton has close to 40. He stated somehow they are able to get volunteers to come, and they are not paying them near as much as the City is paying. Captain Brazier stated it is probably training. In the State of South Carolina you are not required by law to go to the Fire Academy, where by law you have to go to the Police Academy. He stated that basically one can walk in the door and the fire chief can tell him he's a fireman and he can go fight fires. Public Safety does not allow that. Public Safety's system in place does not allow someone to fight fire until they are at least a NFPA Firefighter I, which takes a good bit of training. Mr. LeDuc asked if the other volunteer fire departments required any

training. Captain Brazier stated they probably require some. He stated he imagines there are some firemen that fight fire without training.

Councilwoman Diggs asked if Public Safety ever advertises that they are looking for volunteer firemen. Captain Brazier stated yes, and he receives a stack of applications but he cannot get them to come back. He stated he doesn't know if he scares them away. He said the volunteers meet every first and third Monday of every month and do a short training. They try to keep them informed of what is going on and keep them trained and coming to the quarterly fire training. He said they do not seem to want to hang around anymore. Councilman Dewar asked what the City would gain if we had 17 volunteer firemen. Captain Brazier stated it would hopefully give more manpower on the scene. That is the key. They have volunteers, but they have a lot of volunteers that cannot fight fire. Basically they do support functions such as get equipment, help with rehab of the firemen, etc. He stated they have several volunteers that show up at the fires, but a lot of them are up in age and do not need to be putting on an air pack and going into a structure fire. They need to be doing support type stuff and helping pump the trucks. Councilwoman Diggs asked if when he advertises does he mention that. Captain Brazier stated they do not put an age limit on the ad. Councilwoman Diggs stated they might need to add to their advertisement "Serious Inquiries Only." You do not want someone to fill out the application and then not come back. Captain Brazier stated he knows that for the volunteer service around the state there seems to be issues in keeping the volunteer firemen in the fire service. There has been a big decline. Mr. LeDuc stated if they enter a building they will have to wear an air pack, and there are certain requirements from a physical standpoint that they have to meet. What some of the other volunteer departments have done is they have to pass a physical, but if they are never going to put on an air pack then the physical is different from the one for an interior firefighter.

Councilwoman Diggs stated the City wants people that are physically fit to fight fires. Mr. LeDuc stated there are a lot of roles that they can do and not enter into the building. Councilwoman Price stated they can hand water out. Mayor Cavanaugh asked what they are paid. Captain Brazier stated it was about \$1,200 - \$1,400 a year. It is to help with gas to help them respond to fires from their house. He stated they do not get a large response from the volunteers. Councilman Merry asked what was the commitment level of the volunteers. If there is a fire, do they come or not. Captain Brazier stated there are no requirements for a volunteer. Councilman Dewar stated it doesn't sound like it is a very viable program. He stated that is not meant to be a critical comment. If there are only seven, and they are not that committed, he is not sure why Public Safety should waste time on it. Chief Barranco stated they can push that effort a little more. He stated volunteers typically have other jobs, so during the day you see less volunteers and at night there are more volunteers at fires. We do advertise for that, but they may be able to increase that. He said they have talked to other fire departments and the Fire Academy about how to increase the commitment of volunteers. He stated he was part of a local volunteer fire department in Aiken County, and it is a struggle. You may be the only person to show up on some of the volunteer fire departments.

Councilman Merry asked if Public Safety can fight fires without any volunteers. Captain Brazier stated that was correct. Councilman Merry stated there is not a deficiency in our firefighting capabilities because of a lack of a large volunteer force. Having more volunteers would be a luxury, but not a necessity. Captain Brazier stated they probably currently only have four of our paid volunteer firefighters who can fight interior fires. Councilman Merry asked if they are given an air pack and hose when they show up. Captain Brazier stated yes. Councilman Dewar stated if you have the volunteers, then you would not have every police officer on shift having to respond to a fire so you could maintain some law enforcement capability. Captain Brazier stated that every police officer does not go to every fire call. It is based on where they are assigned on their patrol areas. Councilman Merry stated he wanted to establish a baseline to say that buildings are not burning down because there are not enough firefighters. Captain Brazier stated that is not happening. Councilman Dewar stated he had a job where he had to put on an air pack, and it is a weight on your back.

Chief Barranco stated that with some more public education we might be able to improve the number of volunteers. He said some people think we are a paid department only, but Public Safety does have a volunteer component. Mayor Cavanaugh asked if the volunteer does not go to a fire do they still get paid. Chief Barranco stated they do get paid. He stated they have some volunteers that are auxiliary and do not get a stipend. They have to be with Public Safety and show a continuous level of proficiency and responding to fires to be able to be put into that slot. Mr. LeDuc stated Carrol Busbee and Brunson Cromer probably respond. Their presence and experience are great, but they are not going to fight the fire. Mayor Cavanaugh stated one thing about the small cities is that these people may feel that they better participate because they are such small towns. Mr. LeDuc stated it is a social club also. Mayor Cavanaugh stated in a bigger city the people may figure there are plenty of people to fill that post. Mr. LeDuc stated the whole purpose of why he brought this subject up is if Public Safety gets more volunteers it would help out with the rest of the department. If they are dedicated volunteers that have the experience and knew what they were doing, it would certainly help with the ISO rating and getting the manpower which gives you points, and makes a difference. Chief Barranco stated that was correct.

Mr. LeDuc stated the question he originally wanted to have answered was is there something the City can do to get more volunteers. He wondered if it would make a difference if they got paid \$200 per month. He wondered if there was something we could do to get more volunteer firefighters. He stated the other great thing about it is once they become a volunteer it gives Public Safety an opportunity to look at their capabilities so when Public Safety gets ready to hire someone new, these individuals with some of this training who have worked with the department can be moved up. Chief Barranco stated they use that quite often. He stated Phil Kestin and Craig Burgess were volunteers before they were hired. Mr. LeDuc stated it is something that really needs to be looked at. If there are not going to be more volunteers, then we do not need seventeen slots. He said we would probably reduce the budget. He said they need to show how to get more volunteers. The question is whether it is the money, the amount of training required, etc. Councilman Merry asked who pays for the training for the volunteers. Captain Brazier stated the City does, and the Fire Academy training costs only about \$5.00 a class. It is time away from home because there are a lot of hours involved. If you go to recruit school, then it is eight weeks total. Volunteers usually go two nights a week and on a Saturday until eight weeks of training is completed to get all the certification. It takes a long time. He stated what they find is they have a volunteer that comes in and starts. After about two or three classes and a couple of fire calls, being away from home, he doesn't show back up.

Chief Barranco stated there are some pros and cons at the state level. He stated there is a tax benefit for volunteer firemen that some people participate in. It is about a \$3,500 benefit if they qualify. To qualify they have to meet a certain percentage of the fires and trainings. He stated another thing that happened regarding responding to fires, was there used to be a lot of volunteer fire departments screaming up and down the road. A lot of insurance companies put some restrictions on that, and a lot more liability insurance is required to run lights and sirens. He feels it is a combination of a lot of things, but he thinks there are some things that Public Safety can do to try to enhance that program. Mr. LeDuc stated in most of the volunteer fire departments, when they go to training it is typically two to four hours of training, and they spend half the time eating and socializing. It is a social thing and a network that is important to the communities. He stated there are a lot of advantages, but also some disadvantages. The thing is that they do not have to go to the academy to be a volunteer fireman, but that is a requirement Aiken Public Safety has if they are going to put them inside a building. Councilman Merry stated he did not want to compromise on requiring that if someone is going into a building that can collapse on them and where a tank is needed. He feels they need to be properly trained. He stated it is not only their own life at risk, but all the other firefighters as well. Captain Brazier stated it is also the citizens they protect. Councilwoman Diggs stated when the job is advertised, it needs to be put in the ad. Mayor Cavanaugh stated he thinks the pay is too low. Councilwoman Diggs agreed. Captain Brazier stated they have some that do not get paid at all. Mayor Cavanaugh asked if they come regularly. Captain Brazier stated they are about the same. Mayor Cavanaugh stated there will be some that are dedicated and others want the money.

Councilwoman Price stated she would be interested in knowing if we have a program that discourages versus encourages. She would like us to compare what the City requires as a requirement versus some of the larger cities. Captain Brazier stated he can imagine the larger cities are not allowing volunteers to go into a fire without the proper training. Mr. LeDuc stated when he worked for North Augusta, he was a volunteer fireman. He stated that once a month he had four hours of training. Captain Brazier asked him if he went to the Fire Academy. Mr. LeDuc stated no. Councilman Merry stated if an insurance company thinks firefighters are being sent in to fight a fire without any training, then there could be a very serious problem. Captain Brazier stated he can guarantee you there are fire departments in the state that are allowing people to fight fire without fire academy training. Councilman Merry stated they are either paying more for their insurance or they are not telling their insurance company. Captain Brazier stated they are not telling the insurance companies because they are saying they train the people in house.

Captain Phil Kestin stated another item to discuss was the method of staffing in fire service. He stated that last week he talked about the four approaches that are pretty standard for police staffing. The only approach that can be used on the fire side is the minimum staffing approach because law enforcement operations are continuous. They happen all the time, so making calculations like officers per capita and how many officers per thousand are pretty standard calculations. He stated on the fire side you need to know the minimum needed to make the fire trucks roll, to safely show up at a fire, and fight the fire. The minimum staffing approach is the only approach that can be used to figure how many you need to make the fire department work. He stated if Council would look at the numbers on the handout he provided, Public Safety has five stations, a minimum of three people assigned to each engine truck is very important. That is one guy pumping when the truck arrives and two people fighting the fire. Part of that is because of OSHA. OSHA requires that if you have two people in the fire, you have two people standing outside the fire waiting to rescue those two who are in there. They classify that environment as a fire as IDLH (immediately dangerous to life and health). The reason they do that is the firefighter is going into an environment, and if they do not have the equipment and training they will not make it. That two in and two out process is very important. NFPA likes to have four people per truck, but there are a lot of agencies and departments who are assigning three to a truck. The ladder and service trucks are dealing with things like doing the rescue operations, elevator water structure, ladder supply, dealing with utilities, etc. The four people assigned to that ladder or service truck are very important. NFPA likes numbers like six, but Public Safety knows a lot of people can run four and a lot of agencies use four people on service trucks. He stated there is one supervisor that is out there in charge of that fire scene and is able to manage the shift of firefighters that are out there. If you take those numbers and try to run the fire department based on minimum staffing, there would be 20 people required each time on duty at any one time. Councilman Dewar asked who is in charge – the fire sergeant or the shift lieutenant. Captain Kestin stated it is the fire sergeant. Chief Barranco stated this is just for a fire department. Captain Brazier stated this would be if Public Safety had separate departments.

Captain Kestin stated the way they make those numbers work is the Public Safety concept. They have officers showing up on the scene. If you were to put that on a piece of paper, they are assigned to that company or attack crew. Another group is assigned to the ladder truck, another the elevated water crew. He said the minimum numbers needed to make that fire service work is 20 working at a time. The relief factor on the fire side if you counted how many people work at a time, how many days they are scheduled to work, and how many days they have to take off for vacation, sick, training, etc., is actually 3.2 persons. When you calculate that and go to Ms. Abney to see how many days the driver/operators actually work, the average number of days they are scheduled to get that ratio. He said it is not a one for one kind of situation. He stated if you take the 20 and multiply it by 3.2 for 24 hour shifts, you are talking about 64 firefighters to make that work. He stated the way we do that is with those 26 people permanently assigned to the fire side. We are talking about reducing the PSOs down to 88 sworn from 91 sworn, and we get that number down to a very reasonable number to be able to run. Then we have the supplemental firefighter force. He stated he wanted to compare those numbers from last week to this week because we talked about patrol force last week and

firefighting this week. He stated we currently do that with 88 PSOs and 26 paid people in the fire service and volunteers to supplement, so it is 114 paid positions. If you look at the per capita method we did last week when we figured out how many police officers would be required, we said in this part of the country 2.6 per thousand is pretty normal. You start adding those up, you see what the total numbers look like to run a separate police and fire department. He stated even if you go down to a skeleton crew on the police side of 2.2 per capita for the workload base assignment, you are still talking about having a minimum of 15 more people than what Public Safety operates with now. There would be administrative staff on top of that. It is a fairly efficient way to operate, and they wanted to lay that out for Council.

Councilwoman Price asked how many captains and sergeants Public Safety has. Captain Kestin stated there are 6 captains. Chief Barranco asked if Councilwoman Price meant in police or fire. Councilwoman Price stated total. Captain Brazier stated 6 captains and 13 sergeants. Captain Kestin stated there are 6 lieutenants including their training officer who carries a lieutenant rank, and 13 sergeants. Councilwoman Diggs asked how many police officers are trained to fight fires. Captain Kestin stated all of them.

Captain Brazier stated they received a call recently from the ISO representative stating he will be here in January for the next assessment. They have changed the way they do the assessment. It is basically broken down into Emergency Communications which looks at things like the dispatch center, how many dispatchers are working, how long it takes them to answer a 911 call and how Public Safety responds to alarms. The Fire Department includes the manpower, training, equipment, how we test the equipment annual to make sure it is in proper working order, and the response time. For the Water Supply System they look at the overall water system, including the repair and maintenance of our fire hydrants. He stated Council can see the points on the handout of each area of how it is broken up. He stated this year, starting in July, they have a new area where we can earn extra points called Community Risk Reduction. He stated that is the effort of the fire department to reduce the severity of fire in the community through building codes, enforcing fire codes, plan reviews, working with the building officials, doing fire inspections, public fire education programs in the schools, and things like that. He feels they will earn some points in that area. Instead of the normal 100 points that used to be on the system, now they have an opportunity to get up to 105.5 points in the new evaluation. They will be eligible for this many points in January when the evaluation is due.

Captain Brazier stated the next page of the handout is the classification scales. If you score 90 and above you are considered a Class 1. He stated there are a few in South Carolina. Myrtle Beach Fire Department is a Class 1. He stated there is another small department in the state which is a Class 1. Aiken Public Safety falls into the Class 2 range. During the last evaluation, Public Safety made it by the skin of their teeth. We scored 80.71 points to retain a Class 2. We are right on the edge of being a Class 2 and Class 3. It will be interesting to see where we fall in January. He feels we will be right at that limit again. He stated that was without the 5.5 points. Councilman Merry stated that the City has the new water facility on the southside. Captain Brazier stated he thinks that new water facility will help with the water system. He stated we scored overall with our water system 33.22 points out of 40 points. He feels it will increase some, but he does not know how much. Mr. LeDuc stated one of the biggest problems is the city has certain areas within our district where we do not have any fire hydrants at all. Captain Brazier stated Quail Hollow is an example of that. It is in our fire district. Councilman Dewar asked how often Public Safety receives this rating. Captain Brazier stated it used to be about every 10 years, but since the Charleston fire incident it is every 3 to 5 years. They were here in December, 2010.

Captain Brazier stated ISO rated Public Safety in February 2012, and we were below a Class 2. They took the manpower readings and hours worked prior to us being fully staffed and that hurt a good bit. He stated they had to recalculate, and we did it when we were full staffed and it got us over the hump to the 80.71 to maintain the Class 2 rating.

Captain Brazier discussed insurance. He showed a slide with Allstate ISO rating schedule for brick and frame residential. He stated if the base premium for fire insurance is \$1,000 and you have a Class 7 then you would pay a full 100% of that \$1,000 if it is a brick home. You take that same brick home and if you are a Class 2 you pay 92% of that \$1,000 for your insurance. There is not a difference in insurance rates between a Class 2 and Class 3 for residential. He said they found that basically across the board, there is not a big difference between insurance rates for residential in a Class 2 or Class 3. Chief Barranco stated every insurance company is different.

Councilman Merry stated he got the numbers for residential properties from four different companies – Cincinnati, Auto Owners, Travelers, and Encompass, and the rate with all of them, the difference between a Class 2 and Class 3 is the same. There is no change in premium. In some cases the rate is the same through Class 4 or higher. He stated on commercial lines it is a little different. He stated he thinks with most companies you will see no more than 1% difference to go from a Class 2 to a Class 4. He stated it is fair to say that the vast majority of the homes and citizens in the city would see no change in their homeowners insurance premium going from a Class 2 to Class 3. Commercial is different. There are a lot more variables involved. The fire protection rating is one of the least impactable overall. Cincinnati uses the same multiplier all the way up through a Class 7. When you get to a Class 8, suddenly the premium changes. Auto Owners was the only one he found that did change to go from a Class 2 to a Class 3. The multiplier changes from a 14% credit to a 13% credit, so it is a 1% change in the rate. He stated it is 1% per thousand of coverage. It is an infinitesimal decimal difference if there is any at all from a Class 2 to Class 3.

Captain Brazier stated that is basically what Public Safety found as well. He stated it was not a big difference. Most of the policies between Classes 2, 3, and 4 are all basically the same and there is a "Town Class 3" and "Town Class 2" with Allstate which are the same as ISO rating. It is slightly higher percentage. For commercial the rate is slightly higher. Chief Barranco stated they found that some insurance companies did not use ISO as a rating at all.

Captain Brazier stated the big question was personnel requirements for a Class 2. He stated he found there were no real fixed numbers for each ISO class. He cannot say if they have 20 guys working the fire department we are a Class 2, but if we go to 15 guys working the fire department then we will be a Class 3. That is not the way it figures out. Public Safety earns points on the personnel based on the calculation as shown on the slide. They take the total number of hours worked by every employee that has been trained to be an interior fire fighter and divide by 52 and that gives hours worked per week. You then divide that by 168, and it gives you the hours worked in a 24 hour period. It gives you an average on duty, and that is how we receive our points from ISO. It is not people, but average hours that the people work. With less people the hours will be less so it will be a lower amount of points earned through ISO. They found that it is about a 20% drop. Captain Kestin stated they did some calculations, and if they were to have four less Public Safety officers on duty daily on average, it would be about a 20% reduction in the points they would receive for that part of the calculation. Last time they were assessed they got 8.5 out of 15 potential manpower points, so if they lost 20% of those then it would go to 7 points. That would have been enough to drop Public Safety into a Class 3 with just four less PSOs working. It is different for everyone. A Public Safety Officer only counts as half a person. His hours only count for half because they also do police duty. Volunteer fireman only count for a third, because they are not available all of the time. The people assigned directly to the fire department count as a full person. It is a very complicated calculation.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated what Council is after in looking at all this information is if it tells Council if any reductions can be made or is it telling Council that they need more people. Chief Barranco stated as they were looking at their numbers and comparing now to what the staffing levels were at the last rating, they are actually below those numbers. We had 21 driver/operators, 3 part-time personnel, and 9 cadets at that time. Those numbers have already been reduced. There are 20 driver/operators, 6 cadets, and no part-time people. They will already see a reduction in the staffing portion. He stated they hang their hat on ISO a lot, but making sure they have enough people there to safely fight

fires is the question. He stated enhancing the volunteer firefighter program would help at night, but during the day time they usually have another job. Councilwoman Diggs asked if any more reduction would compromise the safety and services. Chief Barranco stated he did not know if he could say it would compromise safety and services; however they have already reduced from the last ISO inspection and two more positions today as discussed with Council earlier. He stated they look at things in the worst case scenario. He stated reducing at greater levels would draw some concerns for the safety of all the firefighters and all those responding to the calls. Mr. LeDuc stated that based on what they based the last ISO on back in 2012, which was the 81.71, and based on the fact that we have less cadets, officers, and driver/operators, unless we get a significant point adjustment of that 5.5 points, Public Safety will more than likely be a Class 3. We were right at the edge before, and we have reduced the manpower since that time. He stated if we get two or three points from the risk safety factor, we might be able to make that up. He stated we were right at the edge of a Class 3 before. He stated we get hung up on the ISO number, but the main thing to be concerned about is if the best service possible is being provided and is it being done in a safe manner. He stated he brought this up for a couple of reasons. He said we are trying to save money, but also we may end up being a Class 3. It will not affect the insurance or anybody personally, but we need to make sure we have enough people to operate in a safe manner.

Councilman Dewar asked if there was a requirement for a certain number of people to show up for a fire. Captain Brazier stated other than the two in two out going into the interior, there is no real requirement for manpower. He stated there are some numbers they like to see. Councilman Dewar stated that as a minimum, based on what we are saying there needs to be four people at a fire, not including the driver/operator. Captain Brazier stated that was correct. Mr. LeDuc stated the NFPA did not have standards, but now they do. They feel there should be a certain number to have an adequate department which could get into liability issues if you fall below those numbers, and this has come out recently. Chief Barranco stated it is recommended that there be a minimum of 20 people per structure fire. Captain Kestin stated we work in an area most of the year with particularly a very hot climate, so you are talking about a daytime fire when there are no volunteers, 100 degrees out with 100% humidity. You do not want to do that with minimum manpower. It needs to be done as safely as possible so the firefighters can get out of that fire as often as possible and be refreshed and rejuvenated at rehydration stations so they can continue to relieve people. He said that is something you can't do with a minimum number, especially in this part of the country. Councilman Dewar stated probably what gets us by is the mutual aid from other communities. Captain Kestin stated a lot of the volunteer fire departments are automatic mutual aid because they don't have enough staff. Captain Kestin stated we don't want to be dealing, especially in a worst case scenario, with minimum staffing for a fire. He said we want to do that much more safely. Councilman Dewar asked if the County had to add significantly because of Bridgestone. Captain Brazier stated they actually built a station specifically for Bridgestone with a ladder truck, a pump, and three guys. Councilman Dewar asked what Kimberly Clark has. Chief Barranco stated they have a fire brigade.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated it is said all the time that safety in firefighting and fighting crime are the most important things that has to be done in the city. He stated that if we do not man up and something happens there will be all kinds of investigations, and it is not worth it, as far as he is concerned, to run at the low minimum unless we have to. He thinks we should be able to say that we feel we have the right number of people so Council can feel good about it as well and if something happens then at least we were not short with manpower. He said as said earlier it is about money, but it is not all about money. It is about lives too. Chief Barranco stated as they were looking at the cost savings and looking at trying to reduce the staff, they wanted to try this to put forth that effort for cost savings. He stated if it is not going to work then he will come back to Council and let them know. Captain Brazier stated what he thinks they are hoping for is with the improvement in the water system and the community risk reduction we can make up for their loss of manpower and hopefully maintain that Class 2.

Captain Ron Shelley stated he is in charge of the Support Services Division. He stated his full staff is himself as the captain, five maintenance mechanics, and one maintenance worker II. The maintenance worker II is actually a custodian that has direct supervision

of the two inmates, which are part-time. The staffing reflects the proposal discussed earlier of moving Mr. George out of the division. As far as vehicles, he has a vehicle assigned to him, five pick-up trucks (one for each maintenance mechanic), and one vehicle assigned to the maintenance worker II that is used to pick up the inmates. He also has one bucket truck assigned to the division. He stated the depreciation is only \$16,872, which is a little bit low, because most of the vehicles in his division are already depreciated out. He stated his vehicle, the bucket truck, and one of the five pick-up trucks are depreciated out and another one only has about three months to go and it will be depreciated out. The maintenance worker II is actually driving a ghost car. It has been around a long time. It has such low miles on it and still works, so they use it. When it stops working they will get rid of it. He said the reason the depreciation for the vehicles is low as most of the vehicles are already depreciated out. He stated they are responsible for maintaining the equipment, most of the systems, the building and facilities (keeping them updated), fleet maintenance, traffic engineering projects with Rhythm Engineering, all the traffic lights out Whiskey Road, and they are responsible for all traffic light maintenance throughout the city. He stated they do specialized computer and graphic projects. That is mainly Eddie George right now. It may be reassigned at a later date. He stated they are responsible for all city street signs and pavement markings. He stated taking care of the street signs is almost a full time job in itself. They get knocked down and bent and have to be replaced or fixed. They also handle miscellaneous equipment and property purchasing. That does not include all the specials like setting up for the parades, special events on Newberry Street, setting up for Aiken's Makin', etc. They have to set it all up and take it all down when the events are finished.

Mr. LeDuc stated regarding the pavement marking, the city does not have a pavement marking machine that goes out and marks the lines on the street. He pointed out that the street off Whiskey between the CVS and O'Charley's needs to be marked. He said there are a few streets now that need marking. He stated Public Safety has to hire out the marking of streets, but they paint the small parking lines, stop lines, etc. themselves. Captain Ron Shelley stated they were asked to paint East Gate last year, and all they have is a push machine, so they hired that out. No big company wanted to come do it so they hired a company that used the same thing Public Safety would have used. That is why the lines were crooked. Mr. LeDuc stated they amass a number of projects, and then we find someone who can do it by volume. There are not a whole lot of people that do this privately. Councilwoman Price asked how much a machine would cost. Captain Shelley said the one they have now is a single push job, and it cost about \$11,000. Mr. LeDuc stated if you want to get a professional type machine it would be a lot. It would not be used much so it would not be worth it. Captain Shelley stated they use the machine basically to maintain the parking places downtown and other facilities.

He stated the Support Division tries to maintain Public Safety Headquarters, Public Safety Station #2, Public Safety Station #3, Public Safety Station #4, Public Safety Station #5, Downtown Public Safety Office on Newberry Street, Public Safety Training Facility, Traffic and Maintenance Sign Shop, Investigator's Facility, and the Crosland Park house. He stated with five maintenance workers these facilities keep them busy. He stated his people are trained. He has people with a lot of years of experience, and they use that experience and save the city a lot of money throughout the year. Some of the work is purchasing cars or trucks. They do not just take South Carolina state bid. They shop around. A lot of times they can call to Bobby Jones, and they will beat the price of the South Carolina bid by \$300 or \$400. He stated buying multiple vehicles saves money. He stated Finance had just purchased a pick-up truck. He stated he was able to get much more truck from Bobby Jones than he could have ever gotten from the state. They put in some extra stuff, and they got a very nice truck. He said it takes calling around to do that. He stated his division has the ability to do minor maintenance on their own fleet. They can change out batteries, alternators, and change belts. They can do these things and not be charged the \$75 per hour maintenance fee for taking it to a shop. He stated they also had a project in the budget for \$20,000 to replace all the lights in the fire bays. He stated that Bill Musselwhite was able to find the proper lights and ballasts and was able to do the work for about \$1,200. He said they saved that money, and it went to putting new carpet down in Records. He said they save money by doing work in-house.

Councilman Homoki asked if there were any restrictions on keeping business in state. Captain Shelley stated he can look anywhere, and if he can beat state pricing then he can buy from anywhere. Mr. LeDuc stated they also get reimbursed by SCDOT for a lot of the work that is done within this division. He stated they get close to \$130,000 to maintain all the signals. Captain Shelley stated they actually get a check every year from DOT. The Support Division maintains all the lights in the city so SCDOT gives Public Safety that money so they do not have to come out of Orangeburg every time there is a problem. He stated they give an extra \$25,000 in case a control has to be replaced. SCDOT will reimburse the City up to \$25,000. Mr. LeDuc stated if the City had to rely on Orangeburg to come when a signal fails, it would take a while. We are able to be there within minutes to fix it ourselves. Captain Shelley stated since he has so much experience in his division, they have the ability to help other departments as well. He stated they help Public Works with changing out lights downtown because they have the bucket truck. They put the banners up quarterly with the bucket truck. He stated they do a lot in house, but with his people's experience they are able to help other departments throughout the city as well and that saves money as well. He stated he provided drivers during the ice storm. He provided people to direct traffic while they were cutting down the hangers. All of this saves them from paying overtime in another division. He said with the experience of the people in the Support Division, they save the city a lot of money.

Chief Barranco asked Captain Shelley to talk about air conditioners and work on the fire trucks. Captain Shelley stated he has someone he sends to Florida every year to learn mechanical stuff on fire trucks. A lot of the things departments have to send out to a shop they can fix in house, whether it be valves or starters. Councilwoman Diggs asked how much it costs to send the person to Florida for that training. Captain Shelley stated it is about \$1,100 for a five day conference/school. Councilwoman Price asked what the starting salary was for a maintenance mechanic. Captain Shelley stated it was \$29,746.

Captain Shelley stated the main headquarter station is approaching 37 to 38 years old. He stated Bill Musselwhite used to be in air conditioning repair. He stated he saves the city thousands of dollars every year because he has the certification to work on air conditioners, evac it, fix the problem, and recharge it up to a certain size. He stated there is a unit uptown that is about \$50,000, and it has a leak but he is managing to keep it going until they can get the renovation.

Chief Barranco asked if there were any questions on ISO, the Fire Division or Support Division. He stated at Public Safety they are all sort of cross-trained trying to do multiple things with the resources they have to keep the costs low. He stated Captain Shelley's division is a prime example of that. One of his guys is a first responder and a lot of times the maintenance guys are the first ones on the scene because they are working on the lights.

Councilman Dewar thanked Public Safety for their efforts in trying to reduce costs. He thinks he has done a superb job of that.

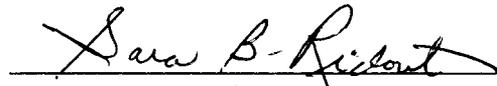
Mr. LeDuc stated that one of the things that he and Chief Barranco had talked about which goes back to the ISO and making sure we have the right manpower and safety during fires, is to have an incentive in the future so the maintenance mechanics do not have to be firefighters. However, if they were all firefighters, we would have four or five additional people that could help in a number of different ways. He said we could have an incentive. He stated now Public Safety has an incentive if a person has a two-year degree or four-year degree. He asked if we could give some kind of incentive so if a person in records or dispatch or some other position could get the proper training they could help us, especially during the daytime hours. He pointed out we have 17 volunteer employee slots in the budget, but we have never come close to having that many volunteer firemen. He would like to take some of the money that is not used for the volunteer firemen and convert it into some kind of incentive to get some of these people trained so they could be a quasi/volunteer/employee.

Councilwoman Price stated she feels that a pure maintenance mechanic would only want to be a maintenance mechanic and not anything else. Mr. LeDuc stated if they were given an incentive they might want to do it. Chief Barranco stated it would be a volunteer thing. They would not have to do it. Captain Shelley stated that three of his employees are firefighters. They wanted to do both. He said one employee came over from the fire service. He said he has three that are fully firefighters. They receive the stipend. Mr. LeDuc stated if they were given an incentive that might encourage others to be firefighters. Councilman Dewar stated that is an incentive that could go throughout the city staff. Mr. LeDuc stated these are some of the things that have not been explored. He said somehow we need to get more people involved. He stated when he first started with the city about 25 or 30 years ago, they had about 12 pretty consistent volunteer firemen. It is now down to four active volunteers. He said we need to do something to encourage more volunteer firemen. Councilman Homoki asked how many fire calls there are per year. Captain Brazier stated there were 946 fire calls last fiscal year. He stated that includes working fires, false alarms, car fires, brush fires, etc. Councilman Merry asked if those calls go to the volunteer firemen 946 times also. Captain Brazier stated yes.

Mr. LeDuc asked Council if there were any questions in general regarding Public Safety. He stated we have had two sessions and thrown a lot of material at Council. Councilman Homoki asked how much Woodside pays for the services that Public Safety provides. Captain Brazier asked if he meant the extra traffic patrols. Chief Barranco stated it is a paid contract – time and three quarters, depending on the officers assigned there. He said he does not think they renewed their contract. Mr. LeDuc stated the City was doing the special patrol during after school hours when the teenagers were flying through there and Woodside was paying Public Safety to have extra people there. Chief Barranco stated he believes they decided they were not going to renew it. Councilman Dewar asked if Public Safety still patrols out there. Chief Barranco stated yes. This was additional traffic patrol.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Cavanaugh adjourned the work session at 5:15 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk