

Aiken City Council Minutes

WORK SESSION

April 1, 2014

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Homoki, Councilmembers Dewar, Diggs, Ebner, Merry, and Price.

Absent: Mayor Cavanaugh

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Kim Abney, Charles Barranco, Bob Besley, Jane Vaughters, Mike Enloe, Brent Reedy of Optimal Debris, Sandra Herrick of Aiken Estates, Mary O'Hare Boscia, a representative of Mr. Fall tree service, Gail Ebner, Maayan Schechter of the Aiken Standard, TV Channel 6, Andrew O'Byrne of the Aiken Leader, Sara Ridout, and about 12 other citizens.

DEBRIS

Mr. Pearce stated Council wanted to have some workshops on the budget for fiscal year 2014-15. He said he had handed out some maps where the city had collected debris and the areas of the city collected on the first pass. He also provided a copy of a letter dated April 1, 2014, from SCDOT. He said he had heard from Leland Colvin, the Chief Engineer for Operations with SCDOT. He pointed out that he had shared with Council at the March 24, 2014, meeting that for whatever reason SCDOT had stayed outside of the SC 118 Bypass picking up debris on state roads. Staff met with them on March 19, in Room 204. They met with Clay Killian, the County contractor, Bobby Usry of SCDOT and their contractor.

Councilman Dewar asked Mr. Pearce if Council could cover the budget first, as people had asked him what time Council would be talking about the debris removal and he had told them about 4:30 P.M.

Mr. Pearce stated he was just putting on record the documents he had handed out for Council. He said staff met with Aiken County and SCDOT on March 19. As posted on the website, DOT began work in Crosland Park, Rutland Drive, Kalmia Hill, Alpine Drive, Aiken Estates, and the 118 Bypass. He said a copy of the letter from DOT was provided to Council. He said our understanding is that the local SCDOT reps will be meeting with Mr. Coakley on Wednesday to coordinate in what areas of the city they will be picking up so we don't duplicate effort.

BUDGET

Public Services Department

Mr. Pearce stated this workshop is on the Public Services Department, and Tim Coakley, the Public Services Director, is present to review his department's budget with Council. He said Councilman Ebner had asked for a list of equipment in the Public Services Department. A list of the equipment was provided to Council.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the divisions in the Public Services Department, which include an Administrative Division, Building and Grounds, Residential Solid Waste, Residential Recycling, Residential Yard Waste. He said in the 2013-14 budget there is a Garage Division. In the 2014-15 budget year the Garage Division will be included in the Public Services Administration Division, which increases the salary amount for Administration and some other line items.

Mr. Coakley provided Council with a listing of some of the projects which the Public Services Department had worked on this year. He said there were many more, but he had listed the highlights for the department. Mr. Coakley reviewed the projects which included:

Installed 150 trees in city parkways. He pointed out the flower baskets which had been installed on the light poles downtown. He said they did a pilot study with 4 or 5 light poles a couple of years ago. They had great response from the Downtown Association about adding some color downtown. He said that program was expanded this year. They built several privacy fences at several locations throughout the city, mostly in support of the Neighborhood Development through the Special Projects Coordinator Emory Langston. He said they had tilled and supported community gardens, which is also a project of the Neighborhood Development. He said they gave the community horticulture advice and soil amendments and tilled the gardens for them to get them in shape at the beginning of the year and the end of the year for fall planting. They removed some ornamental grasses around Heritage Park, which is at York and Richland Avenue. They tuned up the irrigation and sodded the area. He pointed out the Arboretum Trail which runs from the Library down Colleton and over Williamsburg where it crosses the railroad tracks, runs down along Park Avenue, and turns left and goes out Beaufort Street. He said this trail has one of the most impressive collections of oak trees in the United States and possibly the world. He said they used to mow around those trees and spray a lot of weed killer. He said they made some mulch in-house with the tree crew and covered the area with mulch, which is lower maintenance for the crews. They landscaped the Crosland Park Community Center back yard. They landscaped and mulched the land which was purchased across from the Green Boundary Club where they had added some new trees. He pointed out that the old oak trees along the road are on their way out so new trees were planted to fill in.

Mr. Coakley stated his department landscaped the connector road from the Mall to Target. They improved the landscaping on the short road that connects the two shopping centers. He said they defined the bed lines and mulched East Gate Drive medians and right of ways. He said that was a sample of some of the projects they had accomplished. He pointed out the projects were spread out among all the divisions. He said many of the fences built for the Neighborhood Development were built by the garbage crews when they completed their routes. There were skills in-house to do the work.

Councilman Ebner asked if the underground drain system at Heritage Park was still viable. He said that was set up originally as a retention pond. Mr. Coakley stated there is a low spot and he thought the water goes to a French drain close to the parking lot area. Councilman Ebner stated that is the way it was set up. He just wanted to make sure it did not get destroyed. Mr. Coakley stated they did not get that deep. They killed the weeds and laid the sod on top and tuned the irrigation system. He said they did not do any digging.

Mr. Coakley stated 4110 was the Administration Division of Public Services. He said the Administration Division is a new division, and they have only made the budget a couple of times, so they don't have as much trend data to look at. He also pointed out that the Garage Division had been absorbed in the Administration Division. He said the Garage was closed three or four years ago. He said it was decided to subcontract the garage services to local mechanics. He said we kept the Garage Supervisor. He is used for things that he can fix in under 30 minutes. He changes a lot fuses, tightens belts. He said he does things that we would pay a considerable amount to local mechanics to do. He said it is easier to sub out work on transmissions, engine overhauls, etc. He said each supervisor in his department has purchase authority and takes care of his division vehicles. He said it is also convenient for us to have a mechanic that we can put on a job at a moment's notice such as a garbage truck broken down in the middle of Whiskey Road.

In response to a question as to how many supervisors are in the department, Mr. Coakley stated there is one in Recycling, one in garbage, and one in yard debris—three Supervisor I. Those have a Supervisor II over them. In Mr. Rapp's group there is one supervisor and Mr. Rapp. Mr. Tyler is the Garage Supervisor. There are roughly 10 or 11 supervisors.

Councilman Ebner asked if the salary increase of 22% in Administration was because of reorganization. Mr. Coakley stated that was because of moving the Garage Supervisor to the Administration Division. It was pointed out that the Garage Division was eliminated and was combined with Administration, which caused salaries and some other line items to increase.

Councilman Ebner asked what the line item for Building Improvements included. He wondered if the special lights for the parking lot were in that account. Mr. Coakley stated it does, and they asked for \$60,000 last year, and only \$20,000 was funded. He said that was matched with some grants from SCE&G. He said they had changed out all the back parking lot lights under the shed rows and into the parking lot with LED lights that are much more efficient. He said the second phase of that project is the big parking lot lights out front and the lights under the canopy for the fuel island. He said they want to continue that program.

Councilman Ebner pointed out objective No. 4 for the Administration Division was to look for "green" energy and alternate fuels. He asked if anyone had donated a natural gas tank and pump yet. He said that could be \$300,000 or \$400,000. Mr. Pearce pointed out that Rock Hill got a grant. Councilman Ebner pointed out the truck itself does not cost that much more, but it is the infrastructure to fill it that costs so much. Mr. Coakley stated there is a lack of infrastructure in this area. He said in some locations there are several places one could fill up, but in this case the city would have the one and only infrastructure. He said from his research, it is the way of the future. He said at some point the city will be on natural gas vehicles.

Councilman Ebner stated he does not oppose them. It is just a matter that we need to be aware when you drop \$200,000 to \$400,000 to get to that point. He said once you are there, it is a dream to use.

Mr. Coakley stated there are opportunities down the road possibly for public-private partnering. He said he had talked to a representative of UPS. As soon as the infrastructure is in a city they will switch their whole fleet. He said there are opportunities down the road, but we are not there yet.

There was discussion on Gas Charges with it being pointed out that the change has to do with the combining of the Garage and Administration Division which makes it difficult to look back at the track record. Councilman Merry pointed out the big difference in the Department Request for gas of \$7,500 and the Manager's Recommendation of \$2,500. Mr. Coakley stated the reason he requested more is because he has the Garage Supervisor, and he uses a good bit of fuel. He wondered if \$2,500 would be enough to provide gas for the division. Mr. Pearce stated it may not be, but we are kind of way down in the weeds. He pointed out this is not a hard and fast number. He said he was trying to put together a balanced budget. He said the number may change.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that on Form 5 there were three columns, with the first column being what the Department wants in a perfect world. He asked about the other two columns. He asked Mr. Pearce if he would reduce the requests depending on the situation.

Mr. Pearce stated the column "Manager Recommend" gets a balanced budget. He said we can make adjustments, but if we add somewhere we have to take from somewhere. Mr. Coakley stated on Form 5 the Department Request was his request. The 1st Recommend is the amount in this year's budget. The third column is a 10% reduction of the current budget amount.

Mr. Coakley stated the next division was Buildings and Grounds which is Tom Rapp's group. They maintain all the grass, trees and flowers for the city. He said there was an increase in the salary amount. He said he had requested two new employees. He said no new employees had been added in that division in at least 10 years. He said every time we plant a bush or lay sod we need to maintain it and take care of the infrastructure. He

said to keep up with that he had requested two new employees. Mr. Pearce stated the new employees are included in the recommended budget as it stands now.

Councilman Ebner asked about Infrastructure Depreciation. He wanted to refresh his memory. He said when we put in Building Depreciation, that is separate from Equipment Depreciation. Mr. Pearce responded that is a separate line item. Councilman Ebner stated Depreciation is money in the pocket to fix stuff, not to build a new building. Mr. Pearce stated in effect it would be to replace the building. He said that is prorated over a number of years. Councilman Ebner stated at some point Depreciation is just equal to maintenance.

Mr. Coakley pointed out that Building Depreciation is different from Infrastructure Depreciation. Mr. Pearce stated the Infrastructure Depreciation would be the streetscape work that we have done. That is quantified based on the work we did with the 016 One Cent Sales Tax money. Ms. Abney stated that is non-cash depreciation, that is why we don't put a number in the budget. We are not asking to fund Infrastructure Depreciation like we do for Building Depreciation where we actually have an amount. She said the Infrastructure Depreciation is what we have for accrual basis. Councilman Ebner said this says that someday you may build a new building, but you don't put money aside. He said the actual infrastructure items or repair items are actually funded each year. Ms. Abney stated the Infrastructure is like street lights, roads and bridges, and even the brick pavers we installed in the 90's. The life of those is about 25 to 30 years. Ms. Abney stated money is not aside for that, it is just an accrual audit entry that we have to make.

Councilman Ebner asked about line item Machinery. Mr. Coakley stated that amount is mostly for mowers. It is multiple pieces, not just one piece of equipment. Mr. Pearce pointed out it is for a compact mower, outfront mower, brush chipper, 23 workman carts, and a landscaping tractor.

Mr. Coakley then moved to Division 4141 Residential Solid Waste Collection.

Councilman Ebner asked about Account 59-01 Vehicle & Equipment Depreciation for \$175,314. He also asked about Account 74-02 Vehicles for \$340,000. He asked if the amount for Vehicles was for garbage trucks. Mr. Coakley responded that the reason for the increase in Depreciation is that he purchased two garbage trucks this past year for \$340,000 and started making payments into the Holding Account for both trucks. He also proposes to purchase two more garbage trucks this year and a pickup truck.

Councilman Ebner stated he had had considerable experience managing fleets at the Site as well as other sites. He pointed out the list of vehicles in the Public Services Department that Mr. Coakley had provided. He said some of the vehicles you can run for many years such as an eleven year old vehicle on the list. He said his biggest concern is to be sure that we use the right judgment when a motor needs to be replaced in a pickup truck or car. He said when we get in tight budgets we tend to spend \$6,000 or \$7,000 on a \$20,000 vehicle when it would be better to replace it instead of continuing to maintain it. He asked if that is the policy used by the Public Services Department.

Mr. Coakley stated that is the policy. He pointed out on the vehicle list the column DNR, which means do not resuscitate. He said no one in the department is allowed to spend money on those vehicles. They must see him, and then he sees the City Manager. He said they are spare vehicles. He pointed out a spare garbage truck is kept on hand to use when a vehicle is down for maintenance.

Councilman Ebner asked about the vehicle in the garage division labeled DNR. Mr. Coakley responded that was the Garage Supervisor's vehicle, which has been transferred from the Garage Account to the 4110 Administration. He pointed out that vehicle is up for replacement in the next budget. Councilman Ebner stated wherever it goes, we need to follow the same procedure. He said we may put a new motor this year and next year, it will probably need a new transmission. Mr. Coakley stated we have a replacement schedule. Councilman Ebner stated it was the philosophy that he was concerned about over time.

Councilman Dewar stated there was a comment that Depreciation was established by Public Services Director. He asked if the depreciation was really established by Finance. Mr. Coakley responded that the Finance Department gives him a list with a monthly amount for each vehicle for the budget so at the end of the vehicle's life cycle there is money to buy the next vehicle. He said the Finance Department gives him those figures. He said anything new that is purchased during the last year the Finance Department does not have those figures so he forecasts the depreciation with the Finance Department's help.

Councilman Merry stated that Water and Sewer is an enterprise fund and has to be self-funded. He asked if possibly solid waste could be self-funded. He said whether it is actually an enterprise fund or not, he would like for the service to pay for itself and be self-funded. He said he would like for it to work like an enterprise fund, but would not have to be designated as an enterprise fund. He said we lose an unaccountable amount of money on it.

Mr. Pearce stated when we present the revenue section, you will see the revenue from the garbage bill, the sale of roll carts, recycle bins, backyard pickup, etc. He said that brings in about \$2 million a year in revenue. He said the proposed amount for the expense for the Department is about \$3,849,000. He said if it is set aside as an enterprise fund, there would have to be a fee schedule that would cover the full amount of the expenditures. He said we have several different revenue sources, including property taxes. He said property taxes help support the collection costs for the Public Services Department.

Councilman Merry stated then basically property taxes subsidize about \$1.5 million towards solid waste. Mr. Pearce stated the department is in the General Fund, so we use all revenue sources to cover the expenses. Mr. Pearce stated the revenue was not \$1 for \$1 and that is true for the Parks, Recreation & Tourism operation as well.

Councilman Merry stated then essentially the revenue is \$1.5 million less or about half of the actual expenses to provide solid waste collection. Mr. Pearce stated if you look at \$1 per \$1, we collect just under \$2 million. We spend a little over \$3,800,000. Councilman Merry stated the revenue is almost half of the total expenses. He asked if that fully accounts for everything spent on solid waste collection. Mr. Pearce responded that includes all the Public Services Department, which includes the solid waste collection. Ms. Abney pointed out it does not include benefits for the employees.

Mr. Pearce stated just for solid waste collection, the garbage cans, not recycling or yard trash, we are proposing to spend just over \$1.2 million. Garbage fees bring in about \$2 million. However, there is recycling and yard trash, which is part of the department.

Mr. Coakley stated he is correct that the user fee does not pay for the full cost. However, he did not think that was tied to an enterprise fund. Mr. Coakley stated he had done rate studies and if requested he could put together a presentation on what other municipalities do. He said the cost is somewhere in the \$16.50 range, and we presently charge \$14.00. A couple of dollars is made up from other General Fund revenues.

Councilman Merry stated he was not on Council, but there was the issue of commercial garbage collection and the city chose to privatize that service. He said he did not know how staff and Council came to the conclusion to discontinue that service.

Councilman Ebner pointed out the service was losing \$100,000 a year, and the commercial side of the business could do it cheaper for the businesses.

Councilman Merry stated the point is that if the fee should be \$16.50 per month, and we are charging \$14.00 per month, then we are \$2.50 per house short. He pointed out there are 11,645 residential collections. He said we are probably losing \$350,000 a year for the garbage collection, not counting the benefits. He said he was just trying to associate the rate structure more with the expense structure or at least do a real analysis of the cost and expenses. Mr. Pearce pointed out we charge \$14 per month for garbage fee. If we were

to charge \$16.50 that would be a \$2.50 difference for 11,645 customers or about \$30,000 a month or \$360,000 a year.

Councilman Merry stated he would like at some point to have that on the table to look at as far as the rate structure and our expenses and how we are covering those.

Councilman Ebner stated four years ago when we looked at commercial garbage it was about \$250,000 a year and now it is up to about \$300,000. He said there had been a little escalation there. He said it had been pretty consistent. He said it is \$2.50 now and probably be \$2.60 or \$2.70 next year. Mr. Coakley stated cost of fuel is a big component, as we spend a lot for fuel.

Councilman Merry stated he does a lot of business with people in the garbage industry. He said the vast majority of them prefer certain brands of equipment and they use them quite a bit longer than we do. He asked if there were any value in spending the extra money to get equipment that might last longer.

Mr. Coakley stated there could be. Obviously you can buy better equipment. He said part of our issue is the length of the haul to the landfill. He said we buy really good chassis. He said we spend a lot of money on the chassis of the truck, and he still can't get one good enough. He said we don't have issues with the bodies of the truck, and we usually buy the cheapest body we can find for the most part. He said the trucks are full, so they are heavy, and it is an hour each way to the landfill. He said at some point we will need a transfer station. He felt we are right on the verge of the distance where it would make sense to have a transfer station. He said a transfer station is where you dump all the little trucks at the station and reload it on an 18 wheeler and make one big run to the landfill.

Mr. Pearce stated we have looked at that periodically, but the numbers just have not worked. He said we can always look at it again.

Councilman Merry stated he has folks running 10 to 12 year old trucks that they service in house. He said, however, he did not know how far they go to the landfill, what size route they are covering, or how many homes each truck handles. He said he does know that they would not own a freightliner, or an international. They said they can't get out of them what they want to get from them. He said that is something to talk about later.

Mr. Coakley stated we keep the life span of the trucks short on purpose. He said we don't want to replace engines and transmissions. He said garbage trucks run either a 5 or 6 year depreciation payment schedule, and by the time he runs it as a spare for a year or two the truck is 7 to 9 years old. Councilman Merry stated these are some things he would like to discuss more one day.

Mr. Coakley moved to Division 4143 Recycling. He said that division was very similar to the 4141 division. He said it is just smaller. He said they run four garbage trucks in the 4141 division and run two trucks a day in the 4143 division for recycling.

Mr. Pearce pointed out these really do go to the recycling facility in North Augusta. The material does not go to the landfill. Mr. Coakley stated we really do it correctly. He pointed out the trucks that do the collection look identical to the garbage collection trucks. He said, however, two trucks are used for recycling only. He said a common call he gets is that the recycling material is taken to the landfill and not to the recycling center.

Councilman Dewar pointed out Account 45-09. He noted the amount designated for inmate labor. He asked if we were using less than we had used in the past. Mr. Coakley stated that is correct for this division. He said the inmate bill comes as one bill. He pointed out that more inmates are used in the Buildings and Grounds budget cutting grass, raking leaves, etc., and he had shifted more of the cost over to Buildings and Grounds since that is where they work. He said the amount went down in recycling, but up in Buildings and Grounds.

Councilman Dewar asked Mr. Coakley if he was comfortable with the amount for overtime. Mr. Coakley said he was. He said he had not pulled together the overtime numbers. He said over the last 7 to 10 years, the overtime has dropped significantly. He said we had gotten the overtime down in the garbage division also because we bought better equipment and have done better training. He said he had some real quality supervisors that keep after the guys. He said they emphasize that we are out there to pick up the material as quickly as we can without being unsafe. He said he had a good team.

Mr. Pearce stated in the April agenda there would be a report regarding the Workers Compensation. He said last year the Workers' Comp provider refunded about \$2,000 worth of the premium. He said the city workers are working so safely that the refund this year will be over \$5,000. Mr. Coakley stated we really emphasize safety.

Councilman Dewar stated he had heard a rumor that we were not going to have Earth Day this year. Mr. Coakley stated it is not a rumor. It is not happening this year. He said the Energy and Environmental Committee has plans to reintroduce Earth Day next year as possibly a two day event. They have support from the Young Professionals and other businesses. They are going to take a more active role rather than it just being a daytime event for the schools. He said one of the reasons it was cancelled this year is that we have had pretty low turnout from the schools. He pointed out also that the location was devastated due to the ice storm. Mr. Coakley stated the Committee is discussing Earth Day and have not made their full plans yet.

Mr. Coakley stated the last division was 4145 Residential Yard Trash.

Councilman Dewar stated he felt they all recognize that we are at the point in the budget where none of this is firm, but is probably a good estimate of where we think we are headed. Mr. Pearce stated the numbers represent a balanced budget. He said if we go with these numbers we should be good. He said we will continue to look at revenue estimates through the end of April.

Councilman Dewar asked what the longevity bonus was. Mr. Pearce responded it is the bonus that is given to the employees at the annual Awards Day in December for years of service.

Councilman Dewar pointed out there is one employee who has requested tuition assistance. Mr. Coakley stated there is another employee who also wants tuition assistance.

Councilman Dewar asked if it is proposed to get a grapple truck under account 74-02 Vehicles. Mr. Coakley stated it is in the proposal. He said it is needed to replace one which is nine years old. It will be used as a backup truck for a couple more years.

Councilman Ebner stated one thing he wanted to mention was in the goals for Buildings and Grounds and for Administration there was specific mention to dedicate hours to the Northside Redevelopment Initiative. He said he has a little concerned that we point that out. He said we have been doing it already and put a lot of emphasis from Council perspective as well as the Neighborhood Development Association. He said about seven or eight years ago, this type of thing made the newspapers for a long time. He said he has a little concern about pointing that out when we do emphasize it and we have a whole section of the budget dedicated to that area. He said he was raising a flag about it when you specifically dedicate hours to something like that.

Mr. Pearce said we really spread that throughout the entire city. He pointed out on the west side there is all the work that was done on U.S. 1 in the median to beautify that entrance into the city. Mr. Coakley talked about mulching on Park Avenue and Beaufort Street for the avenue of oaks on the east side of town. On the southside there are several parks at the recreation facilities and they do work in Hopelands. He said it is really spread throughout the city. He said it is a goal. It just shows which divisions are

working on some of the Council set goals that were set at Horizons. Councilman Ebner stated he just raises that concern, as it can come back to haunt you.

Mr. Pearce stated that is the reason we try to spread it all through the city.

Councilman Ebner stated he had a request about projects and Mr. Coakley covered some of them in the list of projects list that he gave to Council. He asked that the Public Services Department list ten projects that can be recognized as improvements. He said Mr. Coakley gets emails and calls from people wanting certain things, and he does too. He said with a list he can say this is what we are working on and will add the request on the bottom of the list. He said Mr. Coakley had two or three of them on the list that citizens had requested to him. He said if Mr. Coakley had a list of half a dozen or a dozen projects he plans to do, he felt that would be good. Mr. Pearce stated we could work on that. Councilman Ebner stated the project list Mr. Coakley did had several of the projects listed.

DEBRIS PICK UP

Mr. Pearce stated the second item was discussion about the debris clean up in the city from Winter Storm PAX. He said we have provided several updates, and Council should have a copy of the April 1, 2014, letter from South Carolina Department of Transportation. He said as reported at the Council meeting on March 24, 2014, we were surprised to come to the realization that it appeared that SCDOT had not done any work inside the South Carolina 118 Bypass, which is a very large circle around the city. There are plenty of areas that have state roads and have county road as well within the Bypass area. He said he and Tim Coakley had a meeting on March 19, in Room 204, with County Administrator Clay Killian, and the county contractor who is cleaning up county debris, as well as representatives from SCDOT. Mr. Killian reports they have picked up over 1/2 million cubic yards of debris county-wide. So far they have spent over \$11 million on storm debris clean up. That is a number that is constantly changing for the County. SCDOT did not have numbers but they have been working on state roads throughout the county. They started out clearing the right of way, pushing trees to the side, and then coming back with the debris clean up. They have hired a company out of Florida called J. B. Coxwell Company. They are the large dual black truck and trailers you might have seen. They are kind of a double wagon. After our discussion with DOT, they began work in Crosland Park, Rutland Drive, Kalmia Hill, in Aiken Estates, Alpine Drive, and 118 Bypass Hitchcock Parkway. That work continued over the weekend.

Mr. Pearce stated in the course of the discussion we had provided them with updated maps, and apparently there was some confusion about who was working where. The contractor had initially mentioned to the city that the contractor thought he was going to do all the work inside the city limits. He said we knew in our discussions with FEMA that whoever does the work has to have the obligation for the right of way. He said he had mentioned to Council previously that we had the Legal Department to look at that. It turns out, based on statutory and case law, that the City is on the hook for the debris in the parkways. With that in mind, he said he had what he thought was a productive conversation with both the County and State DOT folks. He said from some of the comments that Council had shared, and some of the other phone calls we received, it appeared that there was still some confusion exactly about what DOT was going to do. He said he had had conversations with State officials and folks with DOT and talked as recently as this afternoon with Leland Colvin. He said we think we have a better definition of what DOT is going to do. He said Mr. Coakley had had several conversations with the local office, and they had indicated that they needed to talk to the folks in Columbia. That has taken place, and that has gone all the way to the Acting Secretary for DOT. There was a question about funding at one point. In any event DOT is ready to come and to work, not just within the Bypass but within the city limits as well on state roads.

Mr. Pearce stated we have a very serious concern about the original historic downtown layout. He said the city does a lot of work in those parkways. He said we have thousands of feet of irrigation system in the parks. He pointed out in front of the Municipal Building there is the green infrastructure with monitoring equipment. In his

discussions with DOT, at least on an initial basis, they are not going to cut trees down. They will do debris removal work. They will work on their right of ways, and they will let the city pick up the debris that is in the historic downtown area. He pointed out Council would see that they refer to that in the letter. They are sensitive to that. Certainly that is something that FEMA in our initial discussions has said is something we need to be sensitive about. That being said, we are ready to go forward. Mr. Coakley is going to have discussions with their folks, if not already, then as early as first thing tomorrow morning. He said we will see the contractor crews in the city limits, and they will be picking up.

Mr. Pearce stated if you go by acreage, we are about 95% of the way through the first pass. As of Friday, March 28, 2014, we had picked up 94,546 cubic yards of debris. Back in 2004 in total we had picked up 80,000 cu.yd. of debris, which took us 13 weeks. About six weeks in on the first pass we had picked up what we picked up in over three months in 2004. It is good news to us. We welcome the help of DOT. We have had help from several different cities. We have had some local volunteers. (Councilmember Price arrived to the meeting.) When we finish out this week, we will have the DOT crews working in the city limits.

Mr. Pearce stated because Council expressed concern at the last meeting, we have looked at working with some local contractors. Since the last Council meeting Stuart Bedenbaugh has spoken with a few different contracting companies. Merely for the cost of hauling debris, we are getting estimates of \$7.50 to \$11.50 a cu. yd. That would just be to haul the debris from curbside to our temporary location, which is on Powderhouse Road. Since DOT has been working with the Coxwell people, it behooves us to see how that is going to go. Mr. Coakley's crews are finishing up downtown this week, before the Masters. The next area to work is in the northside the week after Masters since we will have traffic downtown. He said at this time staff was not going forward with letting any contracts with companies that are in town actually working on debris removal since DOT has confirmed that they will be coming in and doing this work. He said staff feels that it would behoove us to have the cooperative effort with DOT. He said we feel that we could come in and get some of these areas that Council has received phone calls about. He said we do have crews working and do have folks from other departments helping Mr. Coakley's crews working and helping pick up the debris. He said we are six weeks in. He said some folks have been looking at debris for exactly six weeks. He said we think this is good news from DOT, and feel that the second pass through will go much more quickly, particularly with the Coxwell folks in town. The plan would be for Coxwell to pick up their debris. They actually have a separate, temporary site for the debris location. They will work that out with FEMA. The city is meeting with our caseworker, and will get all this clarified. He said in our initial conversations with FEMA for the city's debris removal, the city will be seeking reimbursement as well.

Ms. Sandra Herrick, a citizen of Aiken Estates, said she wanted to thank her representative, Councilmember Dick Dewar, who listens to her complain and ask questions. She said her question is are we getting FEMA money, and are we using FEMA money. If we are, how are we using it. She said the reason she asked is that she sees Williams Drive from her front window. For four days in a row the double trucks are going back to the County area of Aiken Estates, and they have cleaned up for four days in a row from morning to night. She said she went to New Ellenton today, and there were between 9 and 10 of those same trucks between the city limits of Aiken and the city limits of New Ellenton picking up debris in the county. She said she lives in Aiken Estates and has looked at the debris for five weeks. She asked if the City of Aiken was using FEMA money to hire or contract extra people to get the debris picked up. She said she assumed the County was using FEMA.

Mr. Pearce stated there is no FEMA money right now. The County has a contractor. The County does not have a Solid Waste Division with trucks that can pick up solid waste so they have hired a company to pick up debris on county roads. SCDOT also does not have the equipment to handle a storm this size so they have hired Coxwell. Coxwell actually has several subcontractors working for them as well. As it turns out, Williams Drive is a South Carolina SCDOT road. He said Williams Drive and Evans Road were the number one things they talked about when staff sat down ten days ago with the County and

SCDOT. There were other areas, like Bonnieview Estates and several others, that are not in the city. SCDOT will be sending trucks to pick that debris up. In fact that company was over on Evans Road Friday and Saturday picking up debris. They are coming that way to pick up. Ms. Herrick asked if they would pick up in the city limits. Mr. Pearce responded yes they would pick up in the city limits. He said that was in the letter that staff received from SCDOT today. Ms. Herrick asked if they would also pick up on Wheeler, Byrnes, and Kerr. Mr. Pearce responded that was his understanding.

Mr. Brent Reedy, of Optimal Debris a subcontractor with J.B. Coxwell, stated he handles Aiken County for J. B. Coxwell. He said he has several of those trucks as well. He said he knows the Dotson boys. He said they were contracted underneath him. He asked if those were state roads that Ms. Herrick was talking about. It was pointed out they are state roads.

Mr. Pearce stated we had talked about that and met with SCDOT. He said the upper staff has the map, and they know where the state roads are. Mr. Pearce stated there are very few city roads. He said the roads in Houndslake are an example. There are some subdivisions behind the Mall that are city streets. There are not a lot of city roads. He pointed out that Woodside contains private roads.

Councilwoman Price stated she wanted to hear the rest of what Mr. Reedy was saying about the city versus the state. Mr. Reedy stated the J.B. Coxwell contract is for state roads. He said he had noticed on the one way roads that are one way in and one way out, that the city is set up where one way is city with the horse head on the street sign and no state sign, with the other side of the street having the black sign which is S-2..... He said he had noticed one side is city and one side is state on every road the city has. He said for example on Horry, one side is city and one side is state. He said it is that way through the whole city. He said they would only be able to pick up the state side with the black sign.

Mr. Pearce stated we were not trying to cut him off, but he was afraid we are hearing some of the reason for the confusion. He said at the meeting that was held on March 19, 2014, we were very clear that the contractors should pick up both sides of the road. He said we are not going by street signs and whether it has a black sign on it. Those streets are all state streets. All of the historic streets with the county names through the city are state roads. He said the City was going to work on those roads, but when we get to Aiken Estates, even though there is a horse head on the street sign, that is not the indicator he should go by. SCDOT has a map of the state roads. He said that is what he needs to go by. Mr. Pearce stated the question came up on Pine Log Road, for example, with the same kind of situation that Mr. Reedy is describing where one side is the County and one side may be in the city. He said we are not worried about that. It is to be picked up.

Mr. Reedy said they got the map today, and was very familiar with that. He said he would start picking up the blue area. He asked if the city had an Emergency Management Plan in place prior to the storm. Mr. Pearce responded there is a County plan, and there is mutual aid with the County. Mr. Reedy stated the city piggybacks on the County. Mr. Pearce stated it had worked very well, not just for law enforcement, but other things as well. Mr. Reedy pointed out that if the city had kept track of their loads and tickets and filed the proper paper work, there should be no problem getting reimbursed by FEMA. He said they were in town to help. (Councilwoman Diggs arrived at the meeting.)

Councilman Dewar stated he was confused with the last statement. He said he was under the assumption that we had an Emergency Plan. He asked if the city can use the County's Emergency Plan. Mr. Pearce responded that the city has worked under the County's plan for Ice Storm PAX.

Councilman Ebner stated then the city has signed on to the County's plan. Mr. Pearce stated we were at the Emergency Operations Center. Councilman Dewar asked then why we did not use the County's contractors. Mr. Pearce stated to use their contractors would be at the city's expense.

Councilman Ebner stated North Augusta used them, and the County did not charge them a dime. Mr. Pearce stated when it was presented to him early on, the point was that we could piggyback on the County, which means we would have incurred expense. He pointed out the city has very limited funds in our Reserve Fund so we did not avail ourselves of that contract.

Councilman Dewar asked if staff had talked to any of the experts at FEMA. He said this is one time we needed a consultant. He said this is a very technical process. He said he and Councilman Ebner had talked to contractors and FEMA people. It is a very technical process. He said the city could have used the County contractors, and they would have done all the paper work and the city would not have paid anything. He said that is exactly what North Augusta did.

Mr. Pearce stated he would be glad to check on that, but that was not the way it was presented to him early on in the process.

Councilman Dewar stated that is some of the confusion. He questioned whether we could take a look at the numbers we are talking about. He said he wrote an article to the paper based on the numbers that Council was given. He asked how much more the city has to pick up.

Mr. Pearce stated there is probably about another 100,000 cu.yd. of debris to be picked up. Councilman Dewar pointed out that we were 85% complete when we picked up 79,000 cu.yd. It was pointed out that was of the first pass. Councilman Dewar pointed out the city is not finished with the first pass yet. Mr. Pearce stated we are in the process of finishing that up. He said we have another 5% to do by land area.

Mr. Coakley stated at 95% first pass we were at 94,546. Mr. Pearce stated we probably have a couple more weeks to finish the first pass. He said if you average it, we picked up somewhere between 15,000 and 16,000 cu. yd. a week. Over the next couple of weeks we will be over 100,000 cu.yd. The original estimate when he and Mr. Coakley sat down in February, after the storm, was that the first pass would be somewhere around 123,000 to 124,000 cu.yd. He thought that was mentioned when Mr. Coakley appeared before Council at the February 24, 2014, meeting.

Councilman Ebner stated what he felt was confusing is that we keep using the numbers from 2004. He said once we set our milestone we probably ought to use the 124,000 cu.yd. and say we are X % of estimate to finish.

Mr. Pearce stated we did not do our percentage on the 2004 number but on land area—actual acreage. Councilman Ebner stated he felt part of the confusion is that 2004 is in the past. He felt it was good to peg it on day one, but now we are dealing with 2014 only. He said maybe the newspaper is picking it up for their own benefit, but he felt for the citizens they need to know that we have 120,000 to 124,000 cu.yd. estimated. He said that is what it is on the first pass and we have 95,000 of it picked up. Then we are 85% to 95% complete. He felt that would mean more to the citizens than always having 2004 in the picture. He said it is obviously bigger than 2004. He said he did not know if Aiken Standard was picking that up, but he felt it would help the citizens to focus on 2014. He said the other thing we need to get from J. B. Coxwell or meet with them, is the number which he estimates to pick up in the paper and what he has picked up. He has to dance to the tune of FEMA. We may not, but he does. He said he did not know how we get that in the paper. He said Coxwell started last Saturday picking up on SC 118. If he has an estimate that he gave FEMA, then that is what we should put in the paper for our citizens. If he is going to pick up 200,000 cu.yd. and he picks up 20,000 cu.yd. a week, then that is 10% per week. We need to put his number beside our number that is picked up. He pointed out that Mr. Coakley would be doing less now.

Mr. Pearce stated he would. Mr. Coakley stated he would be doing less by area, but still be getting 12,000 cu.yd. a week. He said he would not have as big an area to pick up. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Coakley could readjust his numbers to say he has X

amount to pick up now. He said that is a guesstimate. He said what they are going to pick up is a guesstimate, but they gave some number to FEMA to say what they are going to do. Mr. Pearce stated it would be up to DOT, as they report to DOT. Mr. Coakley stated the percentages are based on area that they cover. Mr. Pearce stated they could work through that. He said he would need to get from Mr. Usry the amount they are reporting that was picked up in the city limits.

Councilman Ebner stated we need to make ours work the same way so we compare apples to apples. He said if the numbers are off a little bit a month from now, nobody will remember except him as a numbers puncher. He felt it was important to have it there. It is a best guess of what it is anyway. He said let's keep two numbers in the newspaper. The city is doing this, and SCDOT is doing this. He said he would rather use SCDOT than J.B. Coxwell and the other contractors. He said let's get the numbers where they have creditability added together.

Councilman Dewar stated he felt that had been a problem from the get go. He was not sure we have a correct estimate of what our debris pickup would be. Mr. Pearce stated we actually estimated 123,000 cu.yd., and we will be very close to that. Councilman Dewar asked how they arrived at that estimate. Mr. Pearce stated Mr. Coakley based that off what we had done before and what we did the first week. He said staff did not come to Council right after the storm, but came to Council on February 24, 2014. He said there was a week's worth of collection done when they reported to Council at the end of February. He said they were in the process of getting organized. He said they took actual ticket numbers and then extrapolated over what we expected our collection might be.

Councilman Dewar stated he wanted to tell how Coxwell did the tasking for the city. He said 13 people drove over the city over the weekend. It took them three days, and they came up with a number for state roads within the city. He said they came up with 200,000 cu.yd. of debris and 5,000 hanging limbs, which we have not even talked about. He said in talking with the FEMA people that is a job in itself. These are limbs that are 2 inches or wider, and they are hanging over the right of way, and there are 300 leaning trees. He said this is a professional making these estimates for the process. This is what Coxwell says he is going to pick up on the SCDOT state streets within the City of Aiken. He said that is cut down because we are going to take a large part of the area according to the letter that we got from DOT today. The downtown area includes some of Coxwell's estimation of 200,000 cu.yd. Councilman Dewar said he has maintained all along that he was not sure staff started with the proper baseline of how much to pick up. He said he had not heard anything about the hanging tree limbs or the tree stumps of the leaning trees, and they all have to be counted. He said the FEMA experts tell him, for example, on the trees you almost have to take a picture of them before you cut them down before they will pay for the work.

Mr. Pearce stated staff has photographed the trees through the city. He pointed out that we have done a good bit of work in Hopelands Gardens. We actually have gone through the parkways in the historic district and identified the hangers. He said we have a set contract with Chavis Tree Company. They have gone around and removed the hangers from the parkways so we have done that work. In response to Councilman Dewar's comment that we would not get reimbursed for that, Mr. Pearce stated we are definitely going to seek reimbursement for that.

Councilman Ebner stated while we are talking about this, let's go down the list of other things. He said what Mr. Pearce had told SCDOT, and he would assume that these guys are aware of that, is that the map they have has an X through the area between Beaufort, Hampton, Greenville, and South Boundary. Mr. Pearce stated he did not know that, as he had just talked with the gentleman this afternoon. He said he had not been provided a map.

Councilman Ebner stated we exempted ourselves from the State doing the historic district. He said the State would have done the roads. Mr. Pearce stated we had already been doing these streets. He said we had already done the hangers, and the arborist had

looked at all of it. Councilman Ebner stated the letter from DOT says that we, as the City of Aiken, have requested them not to do the historical area. Mr. Pearce stated the city would do those areas for the reasons he had just said. Councilman Ebner stated then there is no legal reason for them not to do it. It is just that we prefer it so we don't mess up our own infrastructure. Mr. Pearce stated that it is not just that we prefer, it is an area that we have historically worked for decades and DOT has not done any pickup or tree work in this area.

Councilman Ebner stated he and Councilman Dewar had been talking to people, and they did not understand it that way, but they will clarify their position on it. He said his understanding is that if it is a state highway, SCDOT would have picked it up. He said he asked the specific question of them. He said the parkways are like 100 feet wide, and he asked them if they would pick up everything in the right of way and the answer was yes.

Mr. Pearce stated he did not want to create the wrong impression. He said DOT does take care of DOT right of way. Historically the parkways, and the reason we charge the yard fee, is that the city does the work in the right of ways. He said that is why we have the holding funds for Roadway Enhancement and Parkway Beautification. He said that is the work the city has done as long as he had worked for the city and well before he came.

Councilman Ebner stated he thought there were two issues. He said what Mr. Pearce says is 100% true, but during this emergency he had asked these questions. During the emergency DOT would pick up the debris. He said he had talked to Todd Glover in North Augusta, and his understanding is that the work that DOT has done in picking up on the state highways in North Augusta is zero dollars for North Augusta. At least that is what they told Mr. Glover.

Mr. Pearce stated that he had not been told that. He said when he spoke with Todd Glover, he said that his crews and DOT crews worked their roadways. They both worked them just like we are doing.

Councilman Ebner stated he would verify what they told him. He said Mr. Pearce has said that the city has picked up yard debris for 100 to 150 years, but during the ice storm and declared emergency, DOT would pick up the parkways if we asked them to do so at their cost. He said the city would get some reimbursement, but we don't know if we would get 100% reimbursement.

Mr. Pearce stated he did not know about 100% reimbursement. He said there is a pilot project that would potentially help the city increase the reimbursement above the 75% reimbursement. He said we don't have a final number from the State of South Carolina on what they might give us.

Councilman Dewar stated that is if you have an agreement in place before the storm for work on the state roads within the city. He said we don't have an agreement that he knows of because we sent that agreement back to DOT.

Mr. Pearce stated it would have been helpful to have had him as part of these conversations. He said he was not part of these conversations. Councilman Dewar stated he could assure Mr. Pearce that he did not want to have to do this. Mr. Pearce stated he appreciated what Councilman Dewar is saying, but he did not feel that he had heard from him. He said what he was trying to share with all of Council is the discussion we had with the legal team was that the city was responsible for hazards in the right of way regardless of who picks it up. In discussions with Mr. Coakley that is why we partnered with other cities, and that is why we picked this up. He said we are going to ask for reimbursement from FEMA. He said we have not had any indication yet from FEMA that they would not reimburse that money.

Councilman Dewar asked Mr. Pearce if he had talked with FEMA about that. Mr. Pearce stated staff is meeting with them this week. There was an advance team that came to town. We showed them the exact debris that he was talking about. We showed them the collections that we had done so far, and they were very complimentary about our efforts.

They were very clear that we needed to show that we had a legal responsibility for picking up that debris, so that is why we involved our legal team. The legal team has confirmed, as he had said earlier in this meeting, that the city is responsible for that debris and the city is entitled to seek reimbursement, which is exactly what we did in 2004.

Councilwoman Price asked Mr. Pearce to explain to her the reimbursement with DOT and FEMA and how that works. Mr. Pearce stated DOT has a separate report that they will do. The City of Aiken is not under DOT's reporting for the debris collection. DOT will keep track. They have a contractor. They will turn in the amount of debris that they have collected and seek that reimbursement. The City of Aiken will do the same thing and deal directly with FEMA.

Councilwoman Price stated then that Coxwell will submit all of their billing to DOT and the City will not have to pay them a dime. Mr. Pearce stated that is what he clarified in his response to DOT. Councilwoman Price stated the city would not have to reimburse DOT.

Mr. Reedy stated the city would not have to reimburse for debris pickup on state roads. He said he would like to add one thing to the discussion. He said he believed that at this point in the game the city would be responsible for 15% if the city were to hire an outside contractor to help the city on city roads, not on state roads. He said the state roads inside SC 118 inside the city limits, whether it has a horse head on it or not, the city will not be responsible for the pickup. He said today he had rented a home on Horry Street. He pointed out one side of Horry, the west side, is a city road. The east side of Horry Street would be the state side. It was pointed out by Council that the whole thing is a state road. Mr. Reedy stated the black sign has him confused.

Mr. Reedy stated to ease concerns of Mr. Pearce, the company does pay full responsibility for any damage they do on the right of way. He said his firm, as well as other firms that were contracted under him during this project, do this work for a living. This is what they do. They travel around to all the storms. He pointed out that the city buys their loaders out of Tampa, Florida, which is where he is from. He said they would not be able to make a living using those loaders because of the size of the capacity of them. He said they are too small. He said it comes down to cost effective equipment. He said they can move five times what the city can move in the same load. He said the city will know where they are working. He said whether it is in the historical district, whether you have a million dollars in the right of way, or whatever you have spent in the past on the right of way, the city will know where they are. He said if they cause any damage on the right of way, they are responsible for it, not the city. He said perhaps that could ease anyone's concern about any type damages or claims that might be done on the right of way, as they are responsible.

Councilman Dewar stated he felt they do not have any concern about that. Mr. Reedy stated Mr. Pearce had expressed concern about that. He said the city is picking up on a state road now and using funds from the city budget. He said if the city does get reimbursed, the city will be responsible for 15% of the bill. He said it would not be 100% reimbursed by FEMA. He said he was not from FEMA, but he had been doing this work for 10 years and had been to every state.

Councilman Dewar stated Mr. Reedy was right as far as FEMA is concerned, but in South Carolina, the state is likely to reimburse the municipality for what FEMA does not cover. This again, is assuming we follow all these very difficult and technical rules.

Mr. Reedy pointed out that presently the city is picking up on State roads. The city is using its own budget, whereas Coxwell would come in and do this work and the city would have no expense. Councilman Dewar stated that is our choice because we have great sensitivity in this city for trees. He said ride down South Boundary, and you would see why we have great sensitivity for trees.

Mr. Reedy stated he is from a little town north of Tampa, and they have beautiful live oaks and it is no different. He said they are sensitive to all trees. Councilman Dewar

stated it was not that they could not do it, but the City Manager has decided that the city could do that. Mr. Reedy stated he was just bringing it up as the pick up would be free of charge to the city on state roads, as opposed to the city picking it up. He said they would pay for any damages. He said their work is much faster. He said what they can do with one truck in a day would take the city's whole fleet.

Councilman Dewar stated Coxwell had said they could do the 200,000 cu. yd., 5,000 hanging trees, and 300 leaning trees.

Councilman Merry stated we are not talking about going out and taking down trees or cutting living branches. He said they are talking about debris pickup and hanging limbs. Mr. Reedy pointed out everything is monitored.

Councilman Dewar stated it is one thing to pick up debris any place in the city, including in the downtown area. It is another thing to deal with the trees in the historic area.

Mr. Pearce stated that is where the city works every single day.

Mr. Reedy stated they have certified arborists. He said they have forestry bucket trucks. They make proper branch cuts. He said they would do the exact job that the city is trying to do in a much faster manner. He said that is not his opinion, but a fact.

Ms. Mary O'Hare Boscia said if DOT is willing to do the state roads within the city limits just to pick up the debris, we should allow them and go ahead and take the trees instead of being so sensitive. She said there is a lot of stuff that needs to be moved. Mr. Pearce stated that is what they are going to do. He said that is what's in the letter.

Councilman Dewar stated no contractor is to go into the historic area from Beaufort to Greenville, Hampton to South Boundary. There would be no contractor in there. Mr. Pearce stated it would be the City of Aiken and the city's contractor, which is Chavis Tree Company. We have also used Schneider Tree Company as well. In response to a question, Mr. Pearce responded that Chavis is a local tree company.

Councilwoman Diggs asked what kind of progress they had made in the area—the ones that are there. Mr. Pearce stated he did not have numbers, but he could get that and provide it. Councilwoman Diggs asked if we had given anyone the impression that we don't want them to assist us like DOT.

Mr. Pearce stated when we first got started and the Coxwell company came in, they were under the impression that only they could pick up debris in the City of Aiken. That is why we have had these follow up conversations with DOT. He said he was sure there were conversations on both sides of that aisle and confusion. That is why we have had the ongoing conversations. He felt the letter from DOT today is a huge help to us to clarify in writing where DOT would be working in the City of Aiken. He said this letter does not preclude the other work that Council is concerned about. He said he would have a follow up conversation. He said he told the DOT folks that Council was having a meeting this afternoon and wanted to have this discussion. He said the city has a certified state arborist and city crews in the area, and they have been working. They are working there this week and will be working there next week.

Councilman Merry stated we are all getting calls and emails, etc. He said he had heard a lot of complaints that while people are patient, recognizing the challenge that the ice storm has created and the tree situation as it is, but at the same time we are not able to pick up our regular yard debris on the same schedule. Even when we pick up the debris we are not able to really keep up and are left with smaller debris and leaves. We are not able to really keep the city looking the way that we are accustomed to it looking. He said it seems to him that if Mr. Reedy is right, he is talking about faster and free versus slower and more expensive. He said if we can have that conversation and figure out city-wide what they are qualified to do. He said perhaps if we have sensitive trees, such as South Boundary, which is in his district, that we would like them not to touch the trees

themselves, but to tackle the debris. Mr. Pearce stated the city had already picked up the debris on South Boundary. Councilman Merry stated there had been one pass.

Mr. Pearce responded the city has done two more passes on South Boundary. He said we are trying to clean up for the Masters. He said whether it has been the city or contractors, not everybody is getting 100% of the debris. You can tell where the piles were. Councilman Merry stated if city employees were freed up, then our crews could come behind the guys and pick up the leaves and other yard debris that people are complaining about. Mr. Pearce stated we would look at that. He said we have started the street sweeping back. He said we are doing the clean up. We are going to be doing the stump grinding in downtown starting on Wednesday. We are getting there. We had the worst winter storm of our experience. We have partnered with other cities. We have cleaned up a lot of debris. We are fast closing in on the first 100,000 cu.yd. We are working twice as fast as we did in 2004 picking it up. We certainly appreciate everybody being patient. There are certainly different ways to approach this problem. He said we feel we have had a good plan. We have had good estimates. We have documented everything. We will be sitting down with FEMA. He said there may be information he may get later this week that may behoove him to have a follow up conversation with DOT, but we are working on this and trying to get this done the best way we can at the best value for the citizens.

Ms. Herrick stated for herself and everyone she had spoken with, the workers themselves have done an outstanding job. They have worked very hard, morning to night. There are no complaints about the workers that are doing the work, whether they are city workers or contractors. She said they are very thankful for them.

Councilman Homoki asked when the normal yard debris pickup would resume. Mr. Pearce responded he did not have an answer for that. He said we are still trying to get the storm debris.

Mr. Pearce stated there are people present who want to make money picking up debris. He said he did not hold that against them. There are people who have been looking at debris for six weeks. He said he did not blame them for wanting to get it picked up. He said we have an approach to this. It worked well for us 10 years ago. We have updated that approach. We have updated that equipment, and we do have folks who are doing a great job. There are some bids that we need to open for having the debris ground up. We are working through this process so we can see an end to it. He said our goal is to have all this taken care of before summer time. He said with the amount of debris that we are moving, that is a tremendous testament to what folks have been doing in the partnerships that we have with other South Carolina cities. We are going to continue to look at this. It is not in concrete right now. We just got a letter from DOT, and for a month they did not come within the South Carolina 118 Bypass. Now they are here and will be working within the city limits. We will work through this and make adjustments we need to make when we need to make them.

Councilman Dewar stated he wanted to go back to a comment that Councilman Merry made so we all understand very clearly. He said we have a choice to use a contractor to go anywhere in the city to pick up debris and not use a contractor to do any work on trees where we can choose our contractor to work on the trees. Or, we can choose one of the state contractors whether it is the company that did the work for the County or whether it is J. B. Coxwell, who is doing work for DOT in the right of way. He said we have the opportunity if we want to have the debris removed more quickly than the city can get to it and not task our own staff with this work so they could be doing work elsewhere in the city.

Mr. Pearce stated the letter from DOT says that is underway. He said the letter is a confirmation from DOT for work in the city limits. Councilman Dewar disagreed.

Councilman Dewar stated he would try again. He said the letter says that in the area between Beaufort, Hampton, Greenville and South Boundary city crews will pick up debris. He said J.B. Coxwell could go in tomorrow and just pick up debris, not trees or

hanging trees or anything else, but we are not letting them. Mr. Pearce stated they would pick up debris where the city has already picked up debris. Councilman Dewar stated they could go into the downtown area and pick up debris, but we are choosing to not let them do that. Mr. Pearce stated we are choosing to have them help us in other areas of the city so we can work on the historic downtown.

Councilman Dewar stated Mr. Pearce was not answering his question. Mr. Pearce stated he was doing his best to answer the question. Councilman Dewar stated he knew that, but it was a very simple statement. He said we could allow J. B. Coxwell to go into the historic area and pick up debris on state right of way, nothing to do with trees. Mr. Pearce stated he was not sure they were all state streets. Councilman Dewar stated between Beaufort, Greenville, Hampton, and South Boundary he thought the roads were all state roads. Councilman Merry stated if not all, it was a substantial number. Mr. Pearce stated that is an area that the city has worked and DOT has not worked in a very long time. Councilman Dewar stated he understands, but we have not had a Winter Storm PAX ever before. He said he was just thinking about an alternative to get this done more quickly. Mr. Pearce stated we are looking at the alternatives. We have had folks come in and help us. He said we will continue to accept all the help we can get.

Ms. Jane Vaughters pointed out that there is other debris that will come out once the present debris is picked up. She said the residents are waiting because they don't want to block the street with debris.

Councilwoman Price stated there are so many people who really want to help. There are so many people who really want what is best for Aiken. She said the idea is how we can bring everybody together to make this work for the city. She said the more hands and more people that are qualified and that are engaged in the process can ease this burden of all this debris. She said working together, how can we bring all these players to the table. She said Mr. Reedy is obviously highly qualified, otherwise he would not be in demand all across the country. If you are not good they won't use you. She said Mr. Coakley has to be tired. She knows he has stamina, but the workers are tired. She asked how we can help them. She pointed out Mr. Pearce deals with this day in and day out and sleeps with it. She said how can we make it easier so that people are relieved of their debris once and for all. She said Mr. Pearce has said the crews will probably get to it by summer, but if there is a faster process, let's use it.

Mr. Pearce said those are the steps we are taking today. That is why we have the letter from DOT. He said Coxwell has plenty of areas to work within the city. That is what Mr. Coakley will be coordinating with DOT. He said we can revisit the issue. He said he felt he did not get heard early on in the conversation. He said we are concerned about the historic area. We have a representative from the company that says they are fully on the hook, and they will pay us for everything that gets broken. He said that is fine. He said we needed to have this meeting. He needs to have a meeting with FEMA, and there are some bids that need to be opened. He said we are trying to work through all that this week. He said that Council is concerned that we won't get the historic downtown area picked up before Masters Week, but Mr. Coakley seems to think his folks will get that picked up. He said we will work in the other areas next week during Masters that do not involve the downtown. He said we are on the job. We are accepting help. There are plenty of areas that need to be picked up whether it is first, second or third pass. He said that is what we have started in our conversation with DOT with today's letter. He said we are working on that.

Councilman Homoki stated he wanted something clarified. He said the company that Mr. Reedy represents could probably do the historic district in half the time with his equipment. Mr. Pearce stated he had not heard him say that.

Mr. Reedy stated he probably could do it in one-third the time or less. He said he was a subcontractor so he could not speak on behalf of J. B. Coxwell. He said he was speaking in protocol. He said when they go in these areas, they are responsible for any damages or claims that may be done in the right of way or any right of way in the United States. He said he was not a representative of J. B. Coxwell, but is a subcontractor for J.B. Coxwell.

Mr. Pearce stated there has been a conversation with the principals of J. B. Coxwell. He said he wanted to be clear that we are not barring the door to access. He said there was a conversation staff had with DOT today. Obviously there is going to be a follow up conversation tomorrow.

Mr. Bob Besley, of Rollingwood Road, stated that Councilwoman Price had said most of what he wanted to say. He said, however, another little problem has sprouted up, and he wanted to make sure Council is aware of it. He said he lives on West Rollingwood Road. He said West Rollingwood Road and Rollingwood Road have now become a public dump. He said why drive all the way to the county landfill when you can dump it at the corner of East and West Rollingwood Road. He said there is an absolutely huge pile. It is not only storm debris, but is also yard clippings and someone put some building materials in the pile. He said it is getting worse and worse. He said there is also a pile on Dibble Road. He said the people in the County are not taking the debris so they are dumping it wherever they can, and it is not being picked up. He asked that they please address those issues. He said the issue is at East and West Rollingwood at U.S. 1. He said that is a major dumping spot and it has been going on for about 3 or 4 weeks. He said he followed some people and challenged them. Now they are taking it on the other side of Richland Avenue into the County portion outside the city. He said this is at U.S. 1 and will be right in the sight of those coming in for the Masters.

Councilman Merry stated he wanted to clarify some things he thought he had heard. He said he thought Mr. Pearce had said that Clay Killian said the County had picked up over 1/2 million cubic yards of debris in the entire County in six weeks on County roads. He said if we have estimated that we have 250,000 to 300,000 cu.yd. of debris, it seems if you follow that same ratio that we could have picked all that up in three weeks for half as much debris and half as much time if we had followed a strategy similar to what the County followed.

Mr. Pearce stated he did not know that he would necessarily follow that logic. Mr. Coakley pointed out also that the County spent \$11 million picking that up, and they will have to pay 25% of that.

Councilman Merry, Ebner and Dewar stated that is not what they have been hearing. Councilman Ebner stated it is in the newspaper today, and he had brought the article. He said Mr. Killian has been putting in the paper their dollars. They put in their budget \$2 million of the \$11 million that they have to go beg the State for. Mr. Pearce stated then the County is budgeting the 25% at this point. Councilman Merry stated the City is potentially going to be out 25% whether City of Aiken employees do it or whether the contractors do it. He pointed out it has been stated that the City won't be out anything if the DOT contractors do it. He said either way if the 25% is disputable, it is disputable in either case.

Mr. Reedy stated he would like to make one more suggestion, and he would try to shut up the best he can. He said he can't help himself. He said Council was wanting to know what is more amicable for the city as far as debris removal. He said he was speaking from common sense and experience, which do not always prevail. He said it seems that instead of having city crews pick up DOT roads right now, whether they are in a highly sensitive area or not, if he were Mr. Pearce and Mr. Coakley it seems he would pull his crews off the DOT right of ways, pick up the city right of ways, figure out a game plan, and let the DOT contractors pickup the state right of way. He said at least spend the city money on the city's own right of ways, as opposed to DOT right of ways. He said it seems that would be a good answer to the question and would be more amicable for the city.

Mr. Pearce stated if it would help the conversation, obviously he would have a follow up conversation with the SCDOT staff that he talked to today. He said Council had been very clear in the concerns they have and that is very helpful to him. He said if we need to get a letter redrafted that makes Council more comfortable, we will get that letter drafted and get it out.

Councilman Dewar stated the reason he left the room is that he got a call from Mr. Coxwell. He is very much concerned that the City of Aiken is picking up on his roads, DOT roads, so to speak, and he is just not going to put up with it. He has the job with DOT to do it, and if the city is going to pick up the big piles and there is none for him, he is going back to Florida. He said Council needs to get their act together with Mr. Coxwell rather quickly as he is very, very upset.

Mr. Pearce stated our act is already together with DOT, and he is contracted with DOT. He said that is what we are working on.

Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Pearce had said before Mr. Coakley is still picking up on SCDOT roads. Mr. Pearce said he is because he is picking up the historic grid. Councilman Dewar stated the complaint that came to him is that he accepted that he would not do the historic grid. He asked if the city had trucks picking up on DOT roads outside the historic grid. Mr. Coakley stated we have, but he was not sure we had today. Mr. Pearce stated we had been focusing on the downtown to get ready for Masters Week. Councilman Dewar stated he could only pass on what Mr. Coxwell said. He said he did not have time for a long conversation. He said we all need to work together.

Mr. Pearce stated we all need to work together. He said he would like to respond to Councilman Dewar very quickly. He said staff met with Mr. Coxwell very early on. His opinion was that we should not be picking up anything. He pointed out city crews had picked up 100,000 cubic yards. We have had the conversation with DOT, Coxwell will be picking up inside the city limits. Councilman Dewar stated that is if he stays. Mr. Pearce responded that is between him and DOT. He said his understanding is that DOT talked with Coxwell, and they are ready to go to work. He said what Councilman Dewar is telling him is different from what the DOT people said. He said that is why he would like to have the benefit of a follow up phone call tomorrow.

Councilman Dewar stated he did not know where the confusion came from in the beginning because Coxwell was threatened and thrown out of the city three times for working in Gem Lakes, on the Bypass, and what he describes as Robert Bell Parkway.

Mr. Pearce stated he and Councilman Dewar talked about that on Saturday. He said he did not know why anybody who was representing the city would talk to anybody on Robert M. Bell Parkway because that is outside the city. Councilman Dewar stated he did not know either so he would throw that one away. Mr. Pearce stated he was familiar with the Gem Lakes incident. He said that was a question about a business license. He said that was a question as well and that is why the legal team was involved. He said we are trying to clarify that. He said he had talked with DOT today. They say they have Coxwell ready to go work in the city limits of the City of Aiken.

Councilwoman Diggs asked who threw them out. Councilman Dewar stated you would have to look at Mr. Pearce, Mr. Bedenbaugh or Chief Barranco; he was not sure. Mr. Pearce stated he had not thrown anybody out. He said he knew that Public Safety had a discussion with Mr. Coxwell about a business license. Councilman Ebner asked if Mr. Coxwell did not have a license on that day. Mr. Pearce stated he had to get a business license. He said it was his understanding he had to get a business license. He said Ms. Abney had to leave so he would check on that.

Councilman Ebner stated he wanted to go back to where we started. He said we started off with the City does not have an Emergency Plan itself, but we can tie onto the County's plan he is told. Mr. Pearce stated the city operated under the County debris plan. Councilman Ebner stated the County has an Emergency Plan and the City of Aiken can piggyback off the County's if we desire. He said Mr. Pearce had said the city is responsible to FEMA for payment and not the State. Mr. Pearce responded that the city is dealing directly with FEMA for our FEMA claim.

Councilman Dewar stated the city would be a subgrantee. The state is the grantee. Mr. Pearce stated it does go to the State first. Then the State sends money to the city.

Councilman Dewar stated the city would not send anything directly to FEMA for money. Mr. Pearce stated the city would. He said the city would deal very directly with FEMA. The city will have a FEMA caseworker and file the paper work with them.

Councilman Ebner stated then the city does not do that through SCDOT. Mr. Pearce stated we don't do it through SCDOT, but it is done through the State Emergency Operation. Councilman Dewar stated that is SCDOT, Elizabeth Ryan at the State SCEMD. Mr. Pearce stated that is Emergency Management Division, not DOT. Councilman Dewar stated he felt they are talking with different DOT people. Mr. Pearce stated that is why it would be helpful if we were all in the conversation together.

Councilman Ebner stated he wanted to go back. He said Mr. Pearce is saying the city is dealing directly with a federal employee. Mr. Pearce said we are. Councilman Ebner stated then the city does not do anything with the State. Mr. Pearce stated the City will be working with the State as well. Councilman Ebner stated the State is only going to do the state highways, and they are not paid through the City. Mr. Pearce stated he did not know who he was talking about at this point. Councilman Ebner said the city is dealing with FEMA for 75% to 85% of the money, depending on how the city files. Councilman Ebner stated then the City will deal with somebody in the State whoever it is to get the other 25%. Mr. Pearce stated the State does administer the FEMA funds. He said he wanted to be clear about that. Councilman Ebner stated the City deals with FEMA and then FEMA tells the State to pay the city. Mr. Pearce stated FEMA will send the money to the State and it will be forwarded to the city. Mr. Pearce said he thought they were saying the same thing. Councilman Ebner stated the City will deal with FEMA. They will tell FEMA in Washington to send money to the State of South Carolina and the State will send the money to the City.

Councilman Ebner stated in reading the letter from DOT, the City has decided that the city will do the historic district. Mr. Pearce stated the city made that request. He said he had received a very clear message from Council tonight that we need to revisit that issue, which he will be doing on Wednesday with DOT.

Councilman Ebner stated to him that was a very important point because that was the only reason he and Councilman Dewar went ahead and talked to contractors and called the State. He said he had talked to Todd Glover and our Senator and Representative. Mr. Pearce stated he had also. Councilman Ebner stated he and Mr. Pearce were not on the same page. He said he did not know who to believe, but the guy that is getting paid from the State has a pretty good reason to tell him what he is doing. Councilman Ebner stated our agreement right now is that the State of South Carolina will pick up on all State Highways within the City except the historical district that Mr. Pearce had defined. Mr. Pearce stated that is what DOT said in the letter. Councilman Ebner asked if Mr. Coakley was going to work on the same roads as DOT.

Mr. Coakley stated he had a preliminary very quick conversation with Mr. Usry, who is the State Representative for DOT in this area. Essentially that is who J.B. Coxwell works for. He said all that he had time to talk to him about was that we have a letter in place, which he had not read at that point, and that we wanted to work efficiently together. He said there are some areas where one side of the street is in the city and one side outside the city--half the road is State and half the road is County. He said we don't want to run both trucks down the road. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Coakley and Mr. Pearce needed to clarify that with SCDOT. He said if half is State what they tell him, Mr. Reedy and his boss, is if it has a SCDOT number or S2-XX, they will pick up the whole road right of way to right of way. He said you need to clarify that. Mr. Pearce stated they had clarified that with them on March 19, 2014. Councilman Ebner stated he did not care about March 19, 2014, he said we are talking today with a letter from SCDOT. He said it is a simple question. Call the guy up tomorrow and ask if he picks up both sides of the road—a yes or no. It is as simple as that. Mr. Pearce stated they were very clear they were going to pick up the whole road. We were not going to run two different trucks down the same road. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Coakley does not have to worry about it. He said if it has a SCDOT number on it and Mr. Coakley has to pick up half of it Reggie would like to know. Mr. Pearce said that is fine, but that is not the plan. He

said that is why we welcomed DOT finally coming within the 118 Bypass. Councilman Ebner stated it should be pretty easy for state highways for the city to determine what's between. He said if you said you are going to pick up Beaufort that means right of way to right of way. He said Coxwell will not touch that road, and they won't touch South Boundary, Greenville and Hampton.

Mr. Pearce stated that is what the letter says, but he had said he was going to talk with DOT tomorrow. He said we can spend time on the letter. He said he had told DOT that he was bringing the letter to Council tonight. He said Council had been very clear about the concerns they have. He said he would go back to DOT.

Councilman Ebner stated he was clarifying his point. He said he wanted to go down his list as he had about 8 or 10 items. He said he wanted to get down his list.

Councilman Ebner asked what happened to the Memorandum of Agreement that was brought to Council early on at the February 24, 2014, meeting. He asked if that just died. Mr. Pearce stated we did not sign the agreement. Councilman Ebner stated then the City has no agreement with the State. Mr. Pearce stated DOT has not said at this point that they need the Memorandum of Agreement.

Councilman Ebner asked Mr. Pearce if he had signed a request for assistance from FEMA. Mr. Pearce responded that he had. Councilman Ebner stated he wanted to see that document. Mr. Pearce responded that FEMA has the document, and the city does not have a copy of the document. He said we do not have a copy of the document. It is actually filed with the state. Councilman Ebner stated the city filed the document with the State who gives it to FEMA. Councilman Ebner asked if the city did not keep a copy. Mr. Pearce stated the form was filled out in the room with them and filed with them at their request. Councilman Ebner asked if that was done in February. Mr. Pearce responded yes. It was done at the meeting at USCA. Councilman Ebner asked if there had been an applicant briefing meeting yet with the State and/or FEMA. Mr. Pearce stated we had the briefing at USCAiken. We will meet with the city's caseworker. Councilman Ebner stated that will be for the city. He pointed out there is a meeting on April 7 dedicated to the County. Councilman Ebner asked when the meeting was for the city. Mr. Pearce responded the meeting is this week. Councilman Ebner asked if Mr. Pearce or Mr. Coakley would let him know when the meeting is to be held or let all Council know.

Councilman Ebner stated the next thing is Kalmia Landing and Woodside. They are gated cities. He said he has received answers from one end to the other. He said his understanding is that we, the citizens, should get reimbursed for picking up those two areas. Mr. Pearce said, yes. We had PRT go in Woodside and push the piles together, and the City of Greenville came down and spent a month in there hauling debris to the city's site. Councilman Ebner stated the city should get reimbursed in both gated communities. Mr. Pearce stated the city is asking for reimbursement. Councilman Ebner stated there is a form to fill out to do that. Mr. Pearce stated we are in the process of keeping track of all that debris. Councilman Ebner stated he had talked to Senator Young, and his understanding is that the POAs can file a claim for reimbursement for the work that the POAs did in those two areas through the County Emergency Management with FEMA. Mr. Pearce stated they can work through the County. He said his understanding is that it was for non-profits. He said he would assume that the POAs are 501(c)3. Councilman Ebner stated they are both gated communities which has to be a 501(c)3 and they are made through the Secretary of State. They are filing for the work they did in their communities.

Councilman Ebner asked how we plan to get rid of the piles of debris that we have lying around. He asked how we are getting rid of those. He asked if there would be 100% reimbursement or where are we on those. Mr. Pearce stated we keep saying 100% reimbursement, but we are going to file for the reimbursement we are entitled to. He said we are in the process of bidding out chipping of the wood. The FEMA representative is visiting, and we want them to visit the piles.

Councilman Ebner stated we have to file a claim. Then they will reimburse us whatever they so desire or will they reimburse us 75%. Mr. Pearce stated there is a formula that they follow.

Councilman Ebner asked if the stuff we picked up on the State highways could be percentaged out. He said we should get 100% reimbursement because these guys are grinding it all up for free when they pick it up. He asked if there was any way to divide that out. He asked that Mr. Pearce ask FEMA whether the city can get 100% for the SCDOT road and whatever else for the city roads. Mr. Pearce stated we can ask. He said it is all one big pile at this point. Councilman Ebner stated he understands that.

Councilman Ebner stated the city, with a separate contractor approved by FEMA, will start grinding and hauling the debris somewhere. Mr. Pearce stated that is right. Councilman Ebner asked if the city would be responsible for the hauling or is the state taking care of that. Mr. Pearce stated the state is not taking care of the hauling that he is aware of at this point. He said he could follow up on that. He said what they did before, and what we were looking at again, was finding a buyer for the wood chips. The buyer typically covers the cost of the chipping and the hauling. Councilman Ebner pointed out that right now this whole area is flooded with chips, and the ones that have been ground up all around the county are all state chips. They don't belong to municipalities. Mr. Pearce stated the city has two different interested buyers at this point.

Councilman Ebner stated the city officially requested SCDOT to help the city on SCDOT roads with the debris pickup and the letter is a result of the request. Mr. Pearce stated we had been asking for that for a few weeks. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Pearce needs to ask the question if it is free for the city. Anything they pick up on a highway, the city should not pay a dime for it. Mr. Pearce stated in response to their email, he specifically said our understanding is that the city was assuming no financial responsibility at all for any of the work. Councilman Ebner stated for any debris on a state highway, the contractor will pick it up, grind it, and sweep it. Mr. Pearce stated the city would not have anything to do with that. It is on the State. Councilman Dewar stated we asked for that last Thursday. We did not ask for it two weeks ago. Councilman Ebner asked that they let him finish. Mr. Pearce stated they talked about that on March 19. Councilman Ebner stated their dates differ from Mr. Pearce's, but it does not matter we are getting on it now.

Councilman Ebner stated he reads in the paper about what the County is doing and how much they are spending. He asked when the city could get a cost update. Mr. Pearce stated staff should have that by the April 14 Council meeting. Councilman Ebner stated since the city would be working directly with FEMA, we should have some idea of what's going to be out of the city budget. He asked that it be on the April 14 Council meeting. Councilman Ebner stated since we are in FEMA's pocket versus the State, we should be able to have some numbers from them. He asked if they would give us 75% of everything the city picked up and the State give us whatever. Mr. Pearce stated he was not sure we would have those exact figures by that time. Councilman Ebner said ask him and see. He said have him send us an email that he is not going to do it. He felt it was getting important to us since he is reading that others are getting their 75% reimbursement, with others being the County. He said he wants to hear those words too. Mr. Pearce stated we can do that at the Council meeting.

Councilman Ebner stated for any of the meetings that are being held, and his understanding is that they are all public meetings with the contractors or whatever, for sure he wants to know and Councilman Dewar wants to know and possibly the rest of Council wants to know. He said he has a high level of interest. He said his dealings with FEMA and the Department of Transportation before don't go as smoothly on that type of thing. He felt an extra pair of ears in the room would be good. He said he would not interrupt the meeting, but afterwards he would ask questions.

Councilman Ebner stated going back to the beginning, it is his understanding that the State was told that we would take care of the city roads in the beginning. That is why they did not show up until now. Mr. Pearce asked if he meant city roads. Councilman

Ebner stated any SCDOT road in the city, DOT was told not to get on that right after the ice storm. Mr. Pearce stated that does not explain why they have not worked inside the SC 118 Bypass. Councilman Ebner asked if that was in the city and if the city patrols it. Mr. Pearce stated a lot of that area is in the County. Councilman Ebner asked if the city patrols the SC 118 Bypass. Mr. Pearce stated we patrol sections of it, but not all of it. Councilman Dewar stated the road itself is in the city. Mr. Pearce stated the Hitchcock Parkway is in the city, but not the part by the University. Chief Barranco stated the city does not patrol Robert M. Bell Parkway as that is outside the city. He said they patrol Hitchcock Parkway and University Parkway, but not Robert M. Bell Parkway on which the Convocation Center is located. All of it is SC 118. There is Rudy M. Mason, Robert M. Bell, and Hitchcock Parkway and East Pine Log Road sections. Councilman Ebner stated if Aiken Department of Public Safety made a call out there, would they be able to tell him. Mr. Pearce stated the city does have mutual aid with the Aiken County Sheriff's Office so we could have answered a call. He said he thought Councilman Ebner's question was about routine patrol. Councilman Ebner stated he wants to know if we made a call out there because a contractor was doing something wrong. He asked if we did make a call in Gem Lakes. He said the police did show up in Gem Lakes. Chief Barranco stated they responded to a dispute in Gem Lakes. Councilman Ebner asked who the dispute was between. Mr. Pearce stated we could pull the report on that. Councilman Ebner stated he would like to get that because his whole career had been dealing with contractors. He said he had been a contractor, and is one now. He said he would like to trace down the stories to find out if they are pulling his leg or making him feel bad because he is a highly paid public official. He asked if he had permission to contact Chief Barranco and ask him questions and give him a timeframe when these happened. Mr. Pearce stated we could pull the reports by location. Councilman Ebner stated he would get with Chief Barranco after the meeting. He said he was greatly interested in that.

Councilman Ebner stated he understands that Senator Tom Young has been checking on the letter to be sure we can get it done. He asked if there is anything else that Mr. Pearce needs help from such as with Senator Young or anybody else to be sure we are getting all our money. Mr. Pearce stated he did not know right now, but he was sure there will be opportunities. Councilman Ebner stated he would follow up on the misunderstanding from the beginning when SCDOT did not show up until the last couple of weeks. He said there is a wide variance of that story. He said one thing he wanted to clarify again. He said right now the city has requested that SCDOT not do the work between Beaufort, Greenville, Hampton, and South Boundary. Mr. Pearce stated he had told SCDOT we had a concern about the sensitivity of that area—the historic nature, the specimen trees that are planted there and labeled. He said DOT said they had no problem with letting the city work there, but they would work with us jointly. He said Council had shared some very strong opinions at the table tonight. He said he would appreciate it if he could be the contact person to talk to the DOT representative. Councilman Ebner stated he was going to call them too. He said wait a minute. He was going to call them too because he got a different story. He said he got a story before Mr. Pearce did. He said they are public officials, and he is just a poor citizen and he could talk to them. He said they should give us the same story as of April 1 that he got before April 1. Mr. Pearce stated it is helpful when we have one point of contact. He said he was not telling Council not to call the folks at DOT. He said it is always confusing when we have several different people calling several different people, and there are conversations that he is not privy to that he is hearing about for the first time tonight. Councilman Ebner stated they would go talk with them together. Mr. Pearce stated that will be fine. Councilman Ebner stated if Mr. Pearce wants to be the contact he could set up the meeting. Councilman Ebner stated he would ask the same questions. He said if we have to get his boss David Cook down, we will get him down. He said he felt some of these are high level questions. He said he was not concerned whether we sweep the street or not. He said, however, he was going down Pine Log today and saw the crews raking everything up on a state highway where people were going 55 mph. He said there had been conversation that they were not doing a good job, but everything he sees they are. Councilman Ebner stated he would like to sit down with whomever Mr. Pearce would like from SCDOT and clarify what we talked about today. He said they actually started to work last Friday on SC 118 and were back today. He said Mr. Usry could help us straighten this out. He said there will be some confusion for a few days. He said if we don't have faith enough in the state to do

the roads in the historic area, he guessed that was okay. Mr. Pearce stated he was not saying that. He said he had not said that tonight. Councilman Ebner stated that is what the letter says. He said the letter said we were concerned about them doing it, but we didn't let them do it.

Mr. Pearce stated he had a discussion today with DOT, Mr. Colvin prepared a letter today that he said he was bringing to Council. He said he had had input from Council and now he will have a follow up conversation with the folks at DOT.

Councilman Homoki stated it seemed that we started the whole meeting around 4 p.m. talking about budget. He asked how much we would save or would we actually save money if we allowed the state contractor to work in the historical district. He pointed out they are liable for any damage they cause. He said it is almost like free help. He asked why we would reject free help. Mr. Pearce stated we have not rejected free help. Councilman Homoki stated the letter kind of intimates for them to stay out. Mr. Pearce stated it was not his letter. It was a letter from DOT based on a conversation they had today.

Councilman Ebner stated they confirmed the conversation. He said that is what has them bent out of shape. He said the letter says "as you requested." Mr. Pearce stated the request was based on a conversation and discussions he had had with staff based on the work we have already done in the historic district. He said to Mr. Colvin very plainly that Council was going to meeting today, and he was going to seek input from Council which he now has. He said he will have a follow up conversation so we can get a letter that is drafted that Council will be more comfortable with going forward.

Ms. Vaughters stated she lives in the historic district and has another piece of property. She said she really would not mind if the State could do this work this time. She said this is extraordinary. This is not a policy forever and ever. She said this is an emergency. She felt it is getting worse. She said she doesn't care who picks it up. Mr. Pearce stated we don't care who picks it up either. We just want it picked up the right way. Ms. Vaughters stated the downed trees are enormous. She said they have to have major equipment to get the stuff up. The contractors have big equipment.

Councilman Dewar stated he wants to piggyback on what was said. He said there is no free money. The only question is who bills DOT to get paid. There is no free money. If the contractor does it, the contractor bills DOT and the city does not have to be involved in the paper work. He said he wanted to go back to a couple of points. He said he talked to two people who are FEMA experts. He said these are people who go around the country working the storms and these issues. He said he had confirmed some of what he is going to say with DOT. He said the city has not signed an agreement with DOT. Mr. Pearce stated we have not. Councilman Dewar stated that is going to inhibit us getting reimbursement. He said that is something we need to be very concerned with. He said he felt we can come through it. He said we almost need to ask for that agreement. He said the DOT people he had talked to had indicated that if you don't have an agreement FEMA will not approve the payment. He said that is what he had been told by two different people.

Mr. Pearce stated he had talked with the folks who are working on this particular winter storm event, and we do not have that information. We have shown them the work that we have done to a certain point. They were very comfortable and complimentary of the work that had been done. He said there was nothing that said there was any danger of reimbursement.

Councilman Dewar stated that runs contrary to the information he has received. Mr. Pearce stated it might have been helpful to have everybody in the same room. Councilman Dewar stated there is one set of rules for this and they are FEMA rules. He said FEMA says you can't be reimbursed for a gated community. He said that is a flat statement, but these guys say there is a way to do it because they know how to do it. He said that is a statement in the FEMA rules which have changed significantly since 2004. Mr. Pearce stated he agrees with him on that. Councilman Dewar stated they changed

significantly after Katrina and changed significantly after Sandy. Mr. Pearce stated they did, and the nice thing after Sandy is that there is the pilot project where we can seek a higher rate of reimbursement for the work we did for the first 72 hours and the first 30 days. Councilman Dewar stated that is if we have an agreement with the state. Mr. Pearce stated that is not what we are hearing from FEMA.

Councilwoman Price asked if FEMA says we can't get reimburse for gated communities. She pointed out we had Greenville to go in and move the debris. She asked if it was reimbursable with Greenville going in and moving the debris out somewhere else where it had to be picked up. Councilman Dewar stated, like any government program, both individuals indicated there is a way out, but you have to know how the system works. Typically a city does not know how the system works. We don't do it every day. That is not a negative comment. We just don't do it every day. We don't have a winter storm PAX every day. He said both of the individuals, separately did not know they were talking to other people. He said both have been pretty consistent. He said it is critically important that we get an agreement with DOT. He said we may have to beg, borrow anything to get it dated. He said what they were told is that FEMA is not necessarily going to reimburse the city. For the gated communities, there is a way around it. The County worked with a company called Southern Disaster Recovery. He said they will do their billing; the County does not have to do it.

Councilman Dewar stated our official request to DOT was last Thursday, March 27, as he talked to Mr. Usry about that. He said that is when Mr. Coakley called over and asked for DOT assistance. He said the focus is getting the right information and trying to get on the same page. He said this is so complicated. He said he did not know if we would ever get on the same page. He said depending on who you talk to you get different answers. He said there is some consistency: We need to have the agreement. We need to request the exception. We can hire a consultant that would help us do this entire process, and we could get reimbursed for hiring a consultant, which is something he felt we should do rather than trying to go through the process ourselves.

Mr. Pearce stated we have had conversations with the folks who will be working our case. He said we don't have any indication that FEMA is not paying reimbursement. We don't have any indication of the disaster scenario that Councilman Dewar has outlined. We do have indication that they are quite impressed with the work that has been done so far and they are looking forward to working with us. He said it is a process, and we have to go through it. He said we are going to go through this. We have studied up on this. We have talked with several different folks involved in the process, and we are marching this the way we did before and we got our reimbursement. He said that will be the final test is the reimbursement.

Councilman Dewar stated there is a way to do this with 100% reimbursement, and he hoped we find it. Mr. Pearce stated we are working on it. He said we are trying to get maximum dollars so the taxpayers don't suffer.

Councilman Ebner stated to close out his part, he would like for us to meet with Mr. Usry and Mr. Cook, and, if we have to, the Secretary of SCDOT. We can do it by conference call or however. He said he would like to be at the meeting, and he wants to be sure we are on the same wave length.

Councilman Ebner stated the other part is the newspaper articles. He said he takes exception that Council has gotten all the information that is indicated in the article. He takes exception with that. He said as a City Council and as a person that has worked with people in the city for eight years and working with their sons and daughters now, he has a high respect for everybody. He said he wants everybody to know that. He said he was going to put an article in the paper so stating that. He said his issue is, as he is a numbers guy, that when he asks a question he is expecting some kind of numerical answer or a philosophical answer that kind of fits with what is going on. He said he had read more information in the newspaper on March 26 and April 1, than was given at Council meetings. He said that is Reggie's opinion and it may not count for much, but that is his opinion.

Councilman Ebner stated the other part of this is that a lot of the information that Mr. Pearce had shared today he did not recall it being shared with Council, such as the meeting on March 19, with the county and others. He felt those tidbits would have helped a lot of Council who have received phone calls asking what the city is doing or not doing. They could have said the City Manager and Mr. Coakley met on March 19 with certain people. He felt that kind of information, even though it is tidbits, which may not be 100% accurate, but maybe it is 80% accurate and it would be a help. He said he is getting pounded from his own homeowners association about getting reimbursed. He said the rumors are out. He said it did not come from him. They got their information from somewhere because they did not get it from him or Councilman Dewar that the city would not get reimbursed. He said they are talking to somebody out there. He said he has no answer back to them. He said sometimes the tidbits are such as we have applied to FEMA through the County Emergency Management. He said that is what he got from Tom Young. He said the lady at the Woodside POA applied just like Kalmia Landing did. Then she put out an email to 3,000 people. He said that gets them all bent out of shape. He said those kind of tidbits get to be important at Council meetings. He said you put them in the newspaper, but he felt the tidbits that get in the newspaper two days later should be at Council meetings.

Mr. Pearce stated we have been updating the city website and provided Council with the website. We have also provided updates in Issues and Updates memo. A lot of the things he had heard around the table this afternoon, he is hearing for the very first time. He said as far as the extent and details of the concerns of the citizens, he is hearing that for the very first time. He said he felt Councilman Ebner's concern underscores a need for open and complete conversations so we can help Council the best way we can to discharge their duties. He said we provide reams and reams of information to Council. He said he had been having complaints about he was giving too much information. Now the complaint is that he is not giving enough.

Councilman Ebner stated he was sorry. He said listen to me. He said he reads more in the newspaper. He said Mr. Pearce did not give Council everything that is in the newspaper. He said he did not give Council everything. He did not mention to Council last Monday that SCDOT was working in Crosland Park. He said the city was working in Crosland Park. He said now you have a list of where they are working. Mr. Pearce stated we updated the website when we have the information. He said we work with public information and make it available to the public. We make it available to Council. That is why we post the agenda.

Councilman Ebner said Mr. Pearce never told Council that he had been contacting the state, and they were going to start work. He said tonight Mr. Pearce had said that was two weeks ago before the last Council meeting. He said Mr. Pearce just said it. Mr. Pearce stated that on March 19 he had a meeting to verify the amount of work in the city limits. He said he did talk about it at the March 24 meeting. He said it was not questioned at Monday night's meeting last week to the extent that he was being questioned today. He said Mr. Ebner should know him by now. If you have questions, we will get your answers. We will work on that. They may not be immediate answers. He said we are very happy to answer questions. He said that is a huge part of his job.

Councilman Ebner stated he did not hear Mr. Pearce say anything about a state contract to start work in the city. Mr. Pearce said it was posted on the website, and the information was made available. Councilman Ebner stated he did not hear it at the Council meeting. Mr. Pearce stated he did talk about this issue at the Council meeting. He said he would have been glad to answer questions on Monday night. He said he is glad to answer questions any time. He said that is how he spends the bulk of his day answering questions. He said he wanted everyone to know that he remains ready to answer questions from Council or the public.

Councilman Ebner stated at the Council meeting he specifically asked the status of contractors. He said Mr. Pearce's answer was that they still are not working in the city. Mr. Pearce stated that was right. He said it had been a month, and we had not had DOT

working within the 118 Bypass. When we had the information, we pushed that information out, and he did email that to Council.

Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Pearce emailed it out. He had a meeting on March 19, and Council met on March 24. He said he was sorry he did not hear it and neither did several other Council people that he had asked. Mr. Pearce stated he sent a whole ream of information to Council on Thursday of last week that has not been in the paper.

Councilman Dewar stated that seemed to be in response to his letter. He said quite frankly a 186 page document in response to his letter was overkill.

Councilman Ebner stated there is going to be another opinion in the paper he could assure them on the letters and what has been in the paper.

Mr. Pearce stated he was here for Council, and he would be happy to help Council. He said we are working through this debris issue. He said we are in the middle of the project. We are approaching this in the best way we know how. We are documenting the work we are doing. We are going to seek reimbursement. We are meeting with our caseworker to discuss that.

Councilman Dewar stated he wanted to echo again what Ms. Herrick said there is no lack of support from Council for the workers in the City of Aiken who have done an outstanding job from every department—Public Services, Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, and Engineering & Utilities. It was a great team effort. The implication in the article today could have been read differently. He said Council is solidly behind the employees.

Mr. Pearce asked what article. Councilman Dewar stated the article on the City officials clash on cleanup process in the Aiken Standard.

Ms. Herrick asked if it would be feasible periodically whether it is every other day, every third day, etc. to put a little box in the Aiken paper with an update on the city is now X percentage complete in the first, second or third pass. She felt the problem with the community is they feel that they don't know what is going on. She said all they see is piles of trash in the yards and they wonder what is going to happen, but nobody knows. She said if ever so often there could be something in the paper. She said ever so often let the citizens know things are happening.

Mr. Pearce stated we are doing that on the website, facebook and twitter.

Councilman Merry stated the newspaper could easily get that information off the website. He said he wants to get back to something that Councilman Dewar said. He said when he has a problem with plumbing in his house, he does not try to learn how to plumb. He hires a pro to fix it. He said if there are pros out there that manage this process, manage the billing and can potentially create 100% reimbursement, he did not know that he wanted to learn how to deal with chipped wood or how to fill out FEMA forms. He said he was not sure that we would not want to hire that pro to come fix it. He said if that ultimately results in less work for our staff which is overworked as a result of the storm and less risk to the city as far as reimbursement or lack of reimbursement and at the same time faster debris removal and resolution of the problems, he felt that was a path we should pursue. He said we should hire the pros to do the things we aren't experienced with doing or don't have the expertise to do.

Councilwoman Price stated she has one request. She said heading south at the curve on Whiskey at Coker Springs there is so much debris that it is unsafe. She said the people that are heading east cannot get out if there is a car coming in. She asked if someone could focus on that, it would relieve those folks in a big way.

Mr. Coakley stated he had dispatched a crew to that area today. He said he had a complaint on Easy Street and he went around all that area, and it was awful. He said the area had been worked one time, but he saw that it was a safety issue.

Mr. Pearce said we have had several areas like that where we have addressed the safety concerns. He said we are following up the safety concerns that are called into us. He said we have had several that we have had to address.

Mr. Pearce said, to address Councilman Merry's point, staff had had a very good meeting with FEMA. We have had very good tips along the way. He said we have had staff that are not overworked and overtired working on the issue. He said we try to stay sensitive to cost concerns. He said we certainly call in the expertise we need. He said we have been in contact with several cities that have used the new pilot project. They have been very helpful to us. As far as the paper work we are preparing, we are receiving nothing but compliments from FEMA so far.

Councilman Merry stated he understands, but the people who have been calling him are dissatisfied with either the pace of cleanup or the absence of regular yard debris pick up. He said it seems to him that we could be more efficient and more effective. He said whatever the process has to be, he felt we need to pursue it.

Councilwoman Diggs stated she has people who have contacted her who are worried about snakes, rats, and things like that with the debris. She pointed out that a lot of people walk for exercise, and they have to walk past the piles of debris and they are concerned now that it is getting warmer and things are crawling.

Mr. Pearce stated it is getting warmer, and that is why we want to get finished with these areas. Councilwoman Diggs stated let's hurry up and get this done and give Mr. Coakley some help as we are working him to death. She said she was worried about Mr. Coakley and his crew because they do work from sun up to sun down.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that starting tomorrow the State streets are going to Coxwell.

Councilman Homoki stated he wanted to clarify one thing. He said adding to what Councilwoman Diggs had said the debris piles are a fire hazard. He said if some of the piles were to burn in the historic district some of the houses would go up. It was pointed out that the parkways would too.

Councilman Homoki asked Mr. Pearce what he considered his marching orders to be in relation to utilizing whatever capabilities we have or the State has inside the historic district. His second question is if he is going to keep everybody posted on the proposed meeting with FEMA and DOT.

Mr. Pearce stated he would notify Council of the meeting. He said they would follow up with DOT and have them work in the historic district. He said Council was very clear tonight about that. He said it is unfortunate that we spent so much time talking about that tonight. He said this is just the preliminary conversation he had with them. He said we are very interested in having DOT come work in the city limits. He said that is the bulk of the discussion he had today.

Councilman Homoki stated the letter specifically precludes work in the historic district. Mr. Pearce stated he understands that, and he will have a follow up conversation about that and correct that.

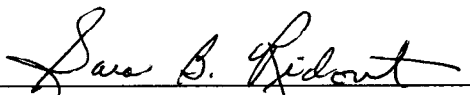
Ms. Mary O'Hare Boscia stated she wanted to clarify. She asked if DOT will now come into the historic district and help remove the debris. Mr. Pearce stated he did not have that commitment yet. He said he had to have a follow up conversation with staff. He said he was totally happy to have help from DOT even within the historical district. He said we had been over that several times. He said he had just said he was going to follow up with DOT tomorrow and discuss the matter.

Mr. Reedy stated he would propose one more thing to Council. He said that would be concerning the city's budget and cash flow. He said he felt the city would be able to piggyback on to the County contract, but he did not know about the State contract. He said, however, he would propose that the city put out an actual contract. He said he had spoken with Mr. Bedenbaugh on the phone the other day. He gave him some numbers verbally on the phone. He said he did not know what the state or county contract is paying. He said he knows what they are paying out so he could only imagine what they are getting paid. He said he felt it would be more amicable for the city to put out a contract and work with the county.

Councilman Ebner stated we could put it out through the county, but we need to get 100% reimbursement. He said he and Mr. Pearce disagree, but the information he is privy to, which is public information, is that we are looking for 100% reimbursement on SCDOT highways. Mr. Reedy stated there is no doubt about that, and you would not be involved in that. Mr. Pearce stated he did agree with Councilman Ebner on that. Mr. Reedy said for what the city had picked up, he was not sure. Councilman Ebner stated he was talking about this day forward. Mr. Reedy stated the city does not have a dog in that fight if DOT comes in and picks up the debris on state streets. Councilman Dewar stated they would only be picking up debris, but the city would still reserve the right to work on the trees ourselves. He said the city only wants them to pick up the debris. Councilman Ebner stated we would iron out the differences. He said he would sit down with Mr. Coxwell and have a donut and get his side of the story. Mr. Reedy said he was not at liberty to speak for Mr. Coxwell. Councilman Dewar stated Mr. Coxwell is not happy right now because we have taken trees from his area. Mr. Pearce said we are really giving him more. Councilman Dewar stated we are not giving him more. He is the SCDOT contractor, and the city is on his streets. Mr. Pearce said that is what he said from day one. He said that is a conversation we have had and that is what he will talk with DOT about tomorrow. Councilman Ebner stated he was free. He asked what time we start to work in the morning.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk