

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

June 13, 2019

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held this date beginning at 2:00 p.m., at 80 Broad Street, City Hall, Council Chamber

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

### **PRESENT**

Councilmember Shahid, Chair, Councilmember Seekings, Councilmember Lewis, and Mayor Tecklenburg **Staff:** Shannon Scaff, Dan Riccio, Steve Ruemelin, Amy Wharton, Chief Reynolds, Lieutenant Bruder, Chief Curia, Fire Marshal Julazadeh, and Bethany Whitaker, Council Secretary Also Present: Councilmember Shealy, and Jeffery Borowy, COO for Charleston School District

The meeting was opened with an invocation provided by Councilmember Lewis.

### **Approval of Minutes**

On the motion of Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Chairman Shahid, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2019 meeting.

### **Hurricane/Storm Predictions and Preparedness**

Shannon Scaff stated that he was the Emergency Manager for the City. He was going to give a brief overview of the hurricane forecast for 2019 and preparedness for the City. They all knew that it only took one. They were just outside of the 30 year anniversary of Hurricane Hugo and it had been that long since they had seen something of that significance. For those that were there during that time, it was very present in their memories still. For 2019, the forecast was that there would be 9-15 named storms of 39 mph or greater. Of those, 4-8 were slated to be hurricane at 74 mph or greater. 2-4 of those events would be major hurricanes at 111 mph or greater. There was a 40% chance of that forecast being spot on, a 30% chance that it would be higher, and another 30% that it would be lower. The question became what the City was doing about it. They couldn't stop the storms from coming, so they had to be ready for them. In the City, he was initially staffing the Emergency Operations Center with individuals that were the right fit and in the right positions, and making sure that those people had the training so they could thrive in the position. As a storm approached, they would activate the MEOC days in advance. They would ramp up as necessary and then they would hunker down until the storm passed. Then, the real work would begin with all of the recovery efforts. Recovery efforts could take weeks, months, and sometimes even years. It would be a long process. He wanted to make

sure he had the right people at the table to help mitigate all of that. He was using the National Incident Management framework as his model and he was using the Police Chief and Fire Chief as his partners to help bring it all together. He appreciated the partnerships. In addition to the Chiefs, he was leaning on the County and other agencies like the U.S. Coast Guard. At the end of the day, it was really a team effort that reached far beyond the City. They were conducting in-house training and exercises. They would have a workshop on July 11<sup>th</sup>, where they would start to review the plans with City leadership. They would also spend some time with their new people hired and bring them up to speed on what was expected from City leadership. They had overhauled the logistics section. When Chief Reynolds first came in, that was one of his main priorities going into the hurricane season, ensuring that there were people that were able to take care of each other with the resources that the City would provide to them, so that they could sustain operations over the long haul. That was being led by Mike Tito, as the Logistics Section Chief. They had representation from Fire, Police, and non-uniformed employees of the City. He was looking at operations to ensure that Stormwater, Traffic and Transportation, and others were prepared and had the tasking they needed to ensure they could recover in a timely manner.

Mr. Scaff continued and said he wanted to talk about what they were doing for their citizens. He and Mr. Daniel Flessas were engaging the community. Over the last four years, they had seen many events that had come close, but hadn't impacted. They were very lucky with Hurricane Florence. As the Emergency Management Director, he was concerned that with each year that passed with a near-miss, where they engaged the evacuation system, complacency would build in. People were going to be reluctant to pack their things and leave. With the sheltering system they had in Charleston County, he wanted to encourage people who didn't have the resources, to have a plan in place, to make sure they were ready to get transportation to a shelter in Berkeley or Dorchester County. He wanted everyone to understand that right now, Charleston County didn't have a shelter in place for a Category 3, 4, or 5 storm. They would have to lean on Dorchester or Berkeley County for Charleston's citizens if a shelter was needed. Charleston County did have something available with respect to a Category 1 or 2 storm, but there was an assessment being led by Charleston County right now to verify the validity of those shelters. So, there was a possibility that Charleston County may not have any shelters for any category storm. He was asking them to help him to send the message to citizens to not be complacent and understand that if they needed a shelter, they would have to go to Dorchester and Berkeley County. He encouraged everyone to have a plan in place and be prepared. They were the emergency managers of their own homes.

Chairman Shahid said that they didn't have any shelters in the City and they didn't have them in the County if it was more than a Category 1 or 2. He was out with the sandbag distribution the last few times and those people didn't want to go all the way to Dorchester. They wanted to be

closer to home. He knew that FEMA had certain requirements as to what they viewed as a satisfactory shelter for any category. He thought it was a shame that they didn't have anything available for their local citizens that would allow them to get back to their homes quickly. They wanted to get back quickly and check on their homes. That needed to be a discussion they were having about shelters. He said that the sandbag distribution worked really well. One of the sites was in his district, at the Piggly Wiggly site, and they may want to look into having some sort of team captain at the locations that had authority over what was going on. The employees from all the City departments were wonderful and were very helpful, but he had been the one to direct the trucks and make sure people had fair access to the bags.

Councilmember Lewis said he didn't know how they looked at areas, but the Septima Clark Crosstown was a big area. In the storm event the previous day, when they shut down Septima Clark, most of that traffic went up Ashley Avenue to Sumter Street to King Street and then they tried to go to Huger. However, they couldn't cross that corner because it was flooded. They turned around and went down King Street and tried to go down Line Street, but they couldn't get across that corner, because DOT had that corner messed up. The day before, they took all that traffic coming off I-26, it couldn't go down Septima Clark, so they were dumped on Carolina Street, and then there was traffic coming from all different directions. There were cars backed up from Line and King Street and across Huger Street. So, when they looked at closing the streets, they needed to make sure that one of the thoroughfares was open because when King and Line and King and Huger was shut down, there was nowhere for the cars to go. Rutledge Avenue was getting just as bad between Simmons and Moultrie. When they knew bad weather was coming, they needed to get out and clean the catch basins. Every catch basin from Romney Street to Line Street was stopped up. Councilmember Seekings said that it was great they were looking at everything. In terms of planning, there were some plans that were put in advance of a hurricane that could be translatable to every storm event, including the event they had the previous day. They had to have a plan to get ahead of the water in the streets. One of the challenges they had in modern day was that what happened on a day like the day before was that as soon as someone saw a street flooded, they posted it up and it showed that as flooded, and then people were redirected down another street which would also be flooded. There were a lot of those examples, but the most prevalent was Ashley-Rutledge-Colonial. As they put the plans together, they should remember they were translatable. The other part was post-storm preparedness and making sure they had people that weren't exhausted from the ramp up, so that they were ready to go as soon the storm was over. It wasn't only hurricane season anymore. It was 12 months per year that something could happen. The day before was an incredible example of that.

### **Update on Littering Enforcement**

Mr. Riccio said he wanted to give an update since they had begun the litter initiative along the roadways near the Bees Ferry Landfill. They teamed up with Keep Charleston Beautiful and the enforcement aspect had transformed more into education awareness and volunteering. Since January, for roadways and marshes, there had been about 120 voluntary clean-ups. He had sent out a notification to all jurisdictions throughout the municipalities that utilized the Bees Ferry Landfill. They had discovered that a lot of the litter could be attributed to uncovered loads. But, notifying the local municipalities had helped in that aspect. They had also coordinated with the Landfill manager and gave them the opportunity, when their employees saw someone coming in with an uncovered load, they could take the information and forward it to the Livability Department for follow-up. Traffic and Transportation had offered the message board, which had helped with awareness. They had been advertising that the fine was \$1,087. Palmetto Pride had given the City 150 tarps for smaller trucks, so they would be issuing those out to individuals who needed them to encourage them to cover their loads. The biggest challenge was SCDOT because when they mowed the interstates and along medians, they didn't pick up the litter first, and all of that litter got shredded by the mowers and stayed there. If anyone could help with that, and gaining a better relationship with them, it would be helpful. The steps they had been taking so far had been instrumental.

Councilmember Shealy said he saw some people cleaning up along Glenn McConnell. Mr. Riccio said that on some parts of Glenn McConnell, the City had a contract for picking up the litter. That was coordinated through Jason Kronsberg's department. They had discovered that the main corridors were the North Bridge and 526 and so many of the clean-ups had taken place in those areas. Councilmember Shealy said he thought the majority of the trucks came down Glenn McConnell Parkway, and it only took a day or two for it to get covered in trash again. Mr. Riccio said it was a constant problem.

Chairman Shahid asked what the best way was to coordinate with SCDOT and Mr. Riccio said he had sat down with them before and asked for their assistance, especially with the mowing. He said that was a good question and he didn't know what the best answer was. The common sense approach was that they could do it or hire someone to clean up the litter first and then mow. If that were to be done, it would be a huge visual impact for people visiting.

### **Fire Department Policy/Practice of Abandoned and Damaged Homes**

Chairman Shahid said that he and Chief Curia had met previously and they were talking about abandoned homes and damaged properties and how the Fire Department addressed that. It came to his attention that there was a house on the corner of Gadsden and Beaufain Streets that had a fire and was boarded up and it had become unstructurally sound. They talked about the Read Brothers site. His concern was what they could do to address these homes and properties that were damaged and abandoned. When they were boarded up, they looked

neglected and stood out in certain communities and areas. There was a house on Concord Street that had been there for a while. Councilmember Seekings said he would like to add 48 Smith Street. That was his view for most of the day. Chairman Shahid said they had discussed that one, as well.

Chief Curia stated that as they started to talk a little more about this issue, they came down to a few things. With the buildings, they needed to figure out how they would secure the buildings, and how they would preserve them so that they didn't have to be torn down, and then how they would be restored, so that they could be viable parts of the community. They kicked around a couple of different ideas. He was happy to say that, as they talked about it, it had become apparent that Chief Julazadeh and Dan Riccio had already been working through this with the Police Department and others. They talked about whether they could accelerate the condemnation process to get things moving along. They thought about ways the City could take control of the property just to remove the immediate dangers and then relinquish the property to developers, and doing other things like give clear guidance to Livability Court to make sure that, as issues came before the court, they didn't keep being deferred. Luckily, those things had already been discussed. Chief Julazadeh and Mr. Riccio were probably more of the subject experts, so he would defer to them to give more detail.

Chief Julazadeh said that from a vacant building standpoint, one of the challenges they often faced was the building remaining unsecured for a period of time and what happened after that such as vagrants or teenagers getting into the building. They wanted to find ways to secure the building quickly and maintain the security. That was one of the primary focuses through how they restored it. After they had a series of vacant house fires over the past months, they assembled a team of Fire, Building, Police, Livability, BAR, and some others. They started talking about the current process, what they needed to fix right now and what could be easily fixed, and how they could start securing the properties sooner and if that would lead towards an ordinance change or process change. Those discussions were under way, and in the next month, they would probably have more solid recommendations about how to improve the process. They had more unsafe placards going up on buildings. Those placards were really driven by fire code issues. They were meant to protect firefighters. They had inspectors going out more routinely and checking those properties. If they deteriorated to the point where they were unsafe for firefighters, they would get a placard. Those notifications went out to the public safety community, so they were aware that the building had structural deficiencies to the point that they shouldn't be going inside. Then, they started the process of trying to get ownership to take action. In some cases, where there was extreme issues, like the Smith Street example, the Building Department was also involved with getting structural engineers and permits for stabilization. It was important to evaluate that process and see what they could do about the speed of getting it done.

Councilmember Seekings said it wasn't working. The fire on Smith Street was July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and that building had had nothing touched on it at all. There were a lot of factors. One of the issues, for him, was how they interacted with the BAR. That was an old structure. It was built in 1840, so there was only so far that they could go. They didn't have the authority, and would need the authority from BAR to demolish it. With Gadsden Street, they were repairing it, and it shifted while people were in it. So, they brought in engineers who said they needed to take it down immediately. So, they had a place like Smith Street, that wasn't an abandoned building, was a historic structure, was badly damaged, and was a public nuisance, if not a safety issue. He asked how they interacted with the BAR to speed that process up. He didn't think the City had the resources to go in, if they couldn't get the property owner to do something, and do it themselves. That was a multi-million dollar repair job. He didn't know that there was a resolution out there.

Chairman Shahid said that was exactly why they were talking about it. The problem was that there were too many moving parts to the process and too many people involved, rightly so. They needed to be involved. He thought the number was that there were 200 damaged structures. Mr. Riccio said it was 250, city-wide. Chairman Shahid said that meant there were 250 structures in the City that had some problem and were boarded up. So, they were just sitting there, in limbo. Councilmember Seekings asked how many of those 250 were historic structures. Mr. Riccio said probably about 95% were historic. There were a few in West Ashley and James Island, but the rest were downtown. They had been tracking and documenting the properties since he had taken over Livability in 2010. They started at 400 structures. They had gotten it down to 250. They treated each structure as a separate case. It was always an ongoing problem. The issue was that there were vagrants always taking down the boards, setting fire, and doing other things. So, they worked with the Police Department on that. They worked with the owners as much as they could and required them to have an affidavit signed, so that trespassers could be arrested. It was pretty much a babysitting process. It was a constant process. They mapped it and GIS had been helping the last few years. It was now on the Mapnet program, so anyone could get to it. They were now upgrading it digitally to include all the different categories. It was a challenge, and one of the biggest obstacles was the impoverished owner. They did have the demolition by neglect category. In the last few years, they had been referring to Ordinance 21-54 and it relied heavily on the court action that took place once the summons were issued. That summons required an individual to rehabilitate the structure within one year with up to a six month extension. It all came down to the money.

Councilmember Seekings asked if they had any resources at their disposal to go in when a property owner had a lack of resources or lack of desire and refused to comply. He asked what they did. Mr. Riccio said that they hired a contractor to board the house, if the owner didn't continue to board it up and they placed a lien on the property. They had many liens and

sometimes there were several liens on a property. They needed to get a contractor on contract, instead of divvying up as they went, to bring out during fires if the owner didn't board it. Councilmember Seekings said that the problem was that they didn't just have a pool of funds, so that on the front end, the City could acquire the property and control it to either rehab or resell it. In the interim, he saw that one example every day, where there was an owner with some resources and no will. It was a two-year problem that was just getting worse. They could send all the tickets they wanted, and it wasn't doing any good.

Councilmember Lewis said that they kept talking about the BAR. They prided themselves on historic homes and saving them, but there were some houses in the City where the owners couldn't afford to rehab the house. The BAR told them they could tear it down and so it just sat there. They had some great architects in the City and the houses could be torn down and built back in that same spot and they would never know the house had been torn down, but that was left up to the BAR. Because of the BAR, they had a lot of those abandoned structures. There was a structure at Cannon and President that the BAR wouldn't let be torn down. Finally, a hard wind storm came and it fell down. The BAR had jurisdiction that City Council didn't even have. They had more power than the Mayor had. Unless some laws or ordinances were changed to do something, they would have those abandoned structures sitting there forever. It would have to come from State Legislation. Mr. Riccio said that the purpose for the group that was meeting was to address those situations.

Mayor Tecklenburg said that he knew they had some bad examples out there. But, whenever he worked with the City in the 90's, he was a member of the Code Enforcement Board. It was a preliminary board to try to get owners to take action before they went to court. Over a ten year period, it was very successful. They had over 1,000 properties then that were in disrepair. It took a variety of things. In the cases like Smith Street, with the demolition by neglect ordinance, they did, on occasion, do the structural repairs. He remembered a few cases where they spent \$80-100,000 and would place a lien on the property. There were a lot of board-up projects, but they did do more extensive work in some cases. Unless they changed the BAR's jurisdiction in the cases of public safety or public nuisance problems, they had to put some money away to be able to do some of those demolition by neglect repairs.

Councilmember Seekings asked, if the public safety officials said it was a public safety issue and the BAR said no, who ultimately had the authority. Mr. Riccio said that the Chief Building Official would have the authority.

Chairman Shahid said that they had started working on this already. He wanted them to put together an ad-hoc task force and make sure they had someone from BAR and someone from either Historic Charleston or the Preservation Society. They needed to look and see if there were any grants available that could help them fund and make sure they structures were

structurally sound and put a lien on it. That way, they could at least have the property secure. He wanted a motion that they let them create the ad-hoc committee to work through the process and have someone from Police, Livability, Fire, BAR, Historic Charleston and/or the Preservation Society.

On the motion of Mayor Tecklenburg, seconded by Councilmember Lewis, the Committee voted unanimously to allow the creation of an Ad-hoc Committee consisting of membership from Fire, Police, Livability, BAR, Historic Charleston and/or the Preservation Society that will look at the policy and practice of abandoned/damaged structures and also research if there are any grants to help the City fund projects to make sure that the structures are structurally sound.

### **Discussion on Stolen Firearms from Unlocked Vehicles**

Chairman Shahid said that he had talked with Chief Reynolds and there had been approximately 125 firearms removed from unlocked vehicles in 2019 to date. The problem was that sometimes those firearms were being used in a crime. It wasn't at epidemic levels yet, but it was a problem that people were leaving their firearms in unattended vehicles overnight.

Chief Reynolds said that they had an inordinate amount of firearms in the community that were in the wrong people's hands. He had been assisting the U.S. Attorney, Emily Limehouse, and her team to talk about some of the shootings they had had in Charleston and how they could get federal prosecution for the worst offenders. They did know that in many cases, the bad guys were getting guns illegally by just pulling them out of unlocked vehicles. They were doing a lot of education and awareness. He was at an event on Saturday night and they talked about this issue with citizens who asked why they weren't doing more on the topic of people stealing guns from unlocked vehicles with no consequences. They wanted to talk about if there was an ordinance or mechanism that would at least create some incentive for people. They did a lot on social media and Nextdoor, and at community meetings. Theft from vehicles were typically from people leaving valuable things in their unlocked cars. Almost 100% of the cases were preventable and the majority of the guns being stolen were from unlocked vehicles. Those same guns were being used in shootings in the City and the Police Department was getting those guns off of people on a regular basis.

Councilmember Lewis asked if there was a law against leaving guns in unlocked cars. Chief Reynolds said that was something they were talking about. Councilmember Lewis said he asked that because there was a lot of publicity about leaving guns in unlocked cars. It was all over social media, newspaper ads, and television about leaving guns where children could get them or being left in cars. They couldn't get in people's heads, but he thought they did a lot to try to get people to realize that they needed to lock their cars and they needed to keep guns away

from kids. He didn't know how much more they could do, but he listened and thought they were doing a good job. Chief Reynolds said the message wasn't anti-gun or anti-second amendment. It was to be a responsible gun owner. There was a lot of data that was showing that the guns were causing accidental deaths, which they had just experienced in their community. A six-year old was killed. There was data that showed that if they weren't available, they could reduce the number of suicides and the violent crime.

Chairman Shahid said that Mr. Ruemelin had brought up that the City was preempted from passing any law that dealt with storage. Mr. Ruemelin said it didn't say storage. It said transfer, ownership, possession, carrying, or transportation of firearms, ammunition, components of firearms, or any combination. They thought that the guns in cars could be encompassed under transportation of firearms. Councilmember Seekings asked if they were preempted from passing a criminal law or any law. Mr. Ruemelin said it said that no governing body, county, municipality or political subdivision may act or regulate any ordinance that regulated or attempted to regulate the things he just read off. Councilmember Seekings said if they couldn't do that, why couldn't they go another route, and make it reportable to insurance if they had a gun stolen from their car. There should be some consequence. They could do something about the reporting of the gun being stolen. Chief Reynolds said that one of the concerns in creating legislation around this was that they also didn't want people to not report when their guns were stolen. They talked about, if the gun was recovered, which some did, they could charge a fee that someone would have to pay to get the gun back. Right now, there was nothing. They even talked about a resolution. On the state side of court, they could have a person with a homicide conviction, with a violent past, prohibited by law from carrying a firearm, who was arrested, and they got no jail time on the state side. This was where they needed to start having discussion. If someone was arrested for shoplifting or drug possession, there was an enhanced penalty for the second and third offenses. But, if someone was arrested for having an illegal gun, there was no enhanced penalty.

Chairman Shahid said in his experience as a prosecutor, they targeted certain people in the tri-county area that had a violent history and they would prosecute them with more severe penalties. They needed to lobby the state legislators to add some teeth and require minimum required sentencing on the state level. They couldn't do anything with the law on a City level, but they could do something civil related, such as having it reported to insurance or having a fee, or not getting the gun back if it was used in a crime. Just telling people to lock their cars or take their firearms out of their cars at night wasn't cutting it. They had almost a gun per day being stolen out of cars. Councilmember Seekings said that was just the ones that they knew about. If they knew about 125, there was more than that. He asked what the Chief suggested.

Chief Reynolds said that he thought the greatest outcome and help would be supporting some of the legislation at the state and federal level. He was meeting with Senator Tim Scott and he thought they might accomplish something. Even a resolution would help with high visibility to let people know it was something they were paying attention to. On the federal side, their U.S. Attorney had been very responsive. They were doing better on that side, but that was just a small part of the issue. He didn't have a great answer. Chairman Shahid said they might need to start lobbying their legislators and look at other solutions that they could do. Mayor Tecklenburg said he felt like he had been lobbying for the last few years. He didn't feel that the majority of their legislators were sympathetic to that discussion or issue. It seemed to be common sense to increase the penalty every time it happened. It may just take some other people getting elected for change to occur, but he had been lobbying since he was elected. Chief Reynolds said that they had just memorialized an officer who had been shot about 17 years ago where he came from. He had been paralyzed and died in the last few days. That was what was going to happen and what had happened in South Carolina. He thought they had an obligation to do more. Those guns were being confronted by their officers every day. Some of the offenders had a violent past and they didn't care. If they wanted a gun, they had a way of getting them now, and a large pipeline was going into unlocked vehicles. They knew where to sell them and it was a problem. Chairman Shahid said there wasn't anything else to do at that point, but it was something they needed to be discussing and looking at anything they could do on a local level.

### **Discussions on the Placement of SROs in Elementary Schools**

Chairman Shahid stated that his discussions with Chief Reynolds about this had been the placement of uniformed officers in schools. They had officers located right now in high schools and middle schools. They also had the School Security Response Team (SSRT) that had 18 individuals trained and located strategically throughout the City. They didn't have officers in the elementary schools, but the SSRT was well-trained in the event to respond to a call from any school. This model was an opportunity to provide security and response for an incident at any school, regardless of whether it was public or not. The climate had shifted a little bit and there have been some issues about funding and placing SRO's into elementary schools.

Chief Reynolds said that they had 52 schools in the City of Charleston and a few in Berkeley County and Daniel Island. There was a large number of schools. When the SSRT was created several years ago, after some significant events occurred, Chief Mullen did research and found the model in New York City. He had just had dinner with James O'Neill who was the Commissioner for the NYPD and they talked about that model and how New York still had that same model in place. He asked Mr. O'Neill if they staffed any of their elementary schools and he said they didn't. They had a large number of officers assigned to high school and middle

schools and they were satisfied with that model. In New York City, they had experienced very real attacks of terrorism, so they were experienced with threat management and intelligence. That was the model that was used for Charleston and was still being used and had been very successful. All of the high schools and middle schools had full-time SROs. They had 11 total in the high schools and middle schools which included James Island Charter High School, and Daniel Island, and they had two at West Ashley High School. Over the past year, Charleston County School District had asked for coverage in all of the elementary schools. There was a total of 18 elementary schools, but he thought one of those 18 had about 30 students, so they were really talking about 17. They had asked for full-time SROs in those locations. Over the last year, they had a lot of productive dialogue. The School District made it clear that that was what the school board had asked for, but they were trying to work through what the Police Department's assets were and what their priorities were, which was to do their best with the SSRT. They also created an off-duty detail where they were providing officers on a less frequent basis at many of those elementary schools over the last six months of the school year. They split the schools with the Sheriff's office and City department. In the last month, there had been a very vocal demand for officers in the elementary schools and he thought they should listen to that. It had been a very loud voice from many different groups. So, they sat down with some people from North Charleston, County Council, and the School District, and asked how they could bridge the gap and get SROs in the elementary schools. They had come up with a plan and Ms. Wharton could help with the dollar side of it which was still being worked out.

Chief Reynolds continued and said that they would shift six of the 18 SSRT's to the elementary schools. The Sheriff's Department, from September 1<sup>st</sup>-January 1<sup>st</sup>, would cover six of the elementary schools. The remaining five were going to be covered by shifting additional assets from other areas in the department to cover those. He believed it was 17, although they hadn't confirmed that with the schools yet, but they did have a meeting. They would now have a total of over 40 SROs. They would have 12 in SSRT, 11 in the middle and high schools, and 17 in the elementary schools. They would also have three supervisors, one over each of those units. With a population of about 140,000, to have a total of 43 SROs was a lot. It was a tremendous commitment and he thought that all of their partners should be very thankful and appreciative of that commitment. They had continued to be committed to the schools and doing their best to do everything they could to keep their schools safe. The feedback he had received had been overwhelmingly positive in terms of their response to critical incidents and events, and the relationships they had. The relationship aspect was the most important aspect to keeping kids safe. They needed to work together in building communication, regular training, and relationships. It was important to talk about how well prepared the officers who worked the schools were. All of their SSRT had long guns, and extensive active shooter training, and good leadership. They were constantly doing scenario-based training. He said that because a lot of this was in response to Parkland. He spent a week in Israel the previous year with a parent of a

student who died in that shooting. From that event, he learned that they had poor policies, poor leadership, poor execution, and they had an SRO. So, having an SRO in the school would not keep kids safe. What would keep them safe was having good relationships, good policies, good training, good leadership, and good equipment. It took practice and a lot of hard work to build that, and Charleston had that. They should be very proud of that. He thought that the Charleston Agency, more than most in the country, had a phenomenal approach to school safety. There were a lot of areas they needed to get better in and work on, but when it came to school safety and the importance of that, he couldn't tell them how much more passionate he was about it and how important it was to him, personally, and he knew the Mayor and Council shared in that, in terms of the value and commitment that they would always have to school safety. Putting an SRO in every elementary school was not the only step, and it wasn't the only thing that made a school safe.

Chairman Shahid said he appreciated the Chief outlining it the way he did. He thought that key part was making sure the officers were trained and he knew they were. Just adding a body into the school was not going to do anything. There were some financial components to this. Ms. Wharton said that for this year, 2019, they should be fine. The next year, 2020, it would be a net increase in cost of \$1.9 million for the City. Councilmember Seekings asked what the total cost was. Ms. Wharton said that it was a little over \$4 million overall. Chairman Shahid said that the City's share would be \$1.9 million starting in 2020. Ms. Wharton said that the additional cost in 2020 would be \$1.9 million and nothing for 2019 because they were shifting people and the County was helping.

Chairman Shahid said that there were currently 18 officers assigned to the SSRT and that would be reduced to 12. Then, there would be 17 in the elementary schools. So, the total budget would be \$4 million. But, in the interim, the County and the School District was helping. Ms. Wharton said the County would be providing officers for the first half of the year. Chairman Shahid asked if this was under a contractual obligation or just an arrangement that had been agreed to. Chief Reynolds said they had made a commitment to the schools for what he had just described. There was still work to be done regarding the dollars. Ideally, the school would pay for a third of each SRO that the City committed to the Charleston County School District. He thought there was some debate as to whether that was occurring currently. They had a fiscal year which started July 1 and the City's started January 1, so they were in the process of finalizing the Memorandum of Agreement.

Jeffrey Borowy, COO of Charleston County School District, said that the current year, they had close to what the Chief had mentioned, \$36,000 per SRO. That was going up by 3% for the next year. So, it would be \$37,699 per SRO they had been paying for already which was 6, plus 18 new elementary SROs. So, the total amount that the district would provide was right around

\$900,000. The money would go to whoever was sourcing the SRO, which would be the City. Chief Reynolds said that the City's total number included schools that weren't under the school districts jurisdiction. Of the 11 middle and high schools, 9 of those were in the Charleston County School District. In the future, they would have those 9, plus an additional 17. Mr. Borowy said that they provided the money per SRO. How the money was used by the City was their call. But, that was what they provided to all four municipalities. It was a per-year review basis. Every year, they took budget items to their Board of Trustees to be enacted the following July 1. Councilmember Seekings said that the school district was paying for 1/3 of the 24 in the school district, although there was a total of 40. He asked if the City was paying the other 2/3's or if the County was helping. Mayor Tecklenburg said that the County had recently indicated that they would pay \$600,000 for their fiscal year starting July 1, but he didn't think that offer was still on the table, if they were getting six SROs from the Sheriffs Department. Mr. Borowy said he thought that was correct. Chief Reynold said they were only providing for a half-year, so they could still have some discussion. It was the same way for all other municipalities. They all staffed in the last year. The City was now about a year behind and next year they would staff them. What the City had that the other municipalities didn't have was the SSRT. Chairman Shahid said that the SSRT helped cover all of the schools. Chief Reynolds said that he understood that when that was voted in, the public and private schools were part of it. Chairman Shahid said a school was a school. It didn't matter which one that children were going to. He said that they would see this in the budget process. Mayor Tecklenburg said they may see it before the budget process by way of a proposed MOU between the County, the School District, and the City.

Councilmember Seekings asked who was driving this. Ms. Herdina said that it was her understanding that Joe Dawson, County Attorney, was supposed to be drafting an IGA for the City to review. She hadn't heard an update, so she wasn't sure what the status of that was. That was what they would bring to Council. Councilmember Seekings said that at this point then, they were just receiving this for information and there would be more to come. Ms. Wharton said they would bring the IGA with the understanding that they would be committing an additional \$1.9 million in the next year. Councilmember Seekings asked how they were going to commit to money for next year before they went through the budgeting process. Ms. Wharton said that was a good question. They would know that was something they would have to do and they would have to remember that when they were trying to do everything else they were trying to do. They would have to decide if they were going to cut something or raise taxes. Chief Reynolds said that was the reason for this discussion, because the school district had a July 1 fiscal date. Based on that, they had to have these discussions. Ultimately, he owned the safety for the City. From a practical perspective, he didn't have the choice to not do this. They had to listen to their constituents and what was important to them. He thought that was how they got

to this place and the dollar side was much more difficult, but they felt like it was important to talk about how they got there.

Mayor Tecklenburg said that it was a complex matter and the City of Charleston had a very robust safety program in place for the safety of their children for all schools. This request had been mentioned and over the last year, they had very reasonably tried to make the case that the City felt like they were providing good safety for their children. They didn't know when an incident would come along and the Chief pointed out that just having an SRO in a school wouldn't keep it safe. The SRO that was in place at Parkland when the shooting happened was being prosecuted for dereliction of duty. He took it on himself to call principals and teachers of both public and private schools since the conversation came up again a month previous. He had gotten glowing reports about the SSRT, that they were highly trained, very personable, and that they did an excellent job. They had the right equipment and were trained for the tragedies that they wanted to avoid as a City. They had a great team in those 18 SSRT team members. He thought this would require more negotiation, with all due respect to the School District and the County because the numbers they talked about at a recent meeting were much lower than what Ms. Wharton was talking about. The fact that the school district wasn't even fully compensating them for the 11 SROs they had was one matter, but he would like to ask the school board and the school district to recognize that the SSRT were at least, if not more valuable than an SRO in functionality. The City should be compensated for a third of their services, as well, and that should be part of this agreement because the City was doing a better job with the combination of the SROs and SSRT. County Council did not recognize that at all and they didn't know what was going on with the SSRT and some of the comments they made he felt were inappropriate. They had tried to educate them about that and he thought they understood a little better, but fair was fair.

Chairman Shahid thanked the Mayor for his comments. He would support the Police Department and Chief Reynolds. The model seemed to be working well, but they needed to look at the reality of how to protect their children. They would look to the Chief and the Mayor for guidance and see where it would end up. Chief Reynolds said that the COO and Superintendent had been very amicable with him and the team and accepted that they had a little bit of a different approach. There had been some public discussion and opinions outside of their teams, but they would get to where they needed to be together. The biggest shared goal was that they followed up on things and could prevent situations from occurring. Their biggest priority was safety.

#### **Discussion of Amending Ordinance Section 2-56 to include Judicial Committee**

Chairman Shahid said that they had been talking about modifying the Ordinance 2-56. The Public Safety Committee's responsibilities included four things. Those were recommendations

to Council on all matters pertaining to fire service policy, police service policy, civil defense and emergency planning, and municipal penal ordinances and court services. For their reference, he included 'municipal court operations', 2-137 and the overall makeup of judges which was section 20-4, and the court system itself which was 20-1 et al. He thought some of this would tie into item 12, but whether the Committee had any oversight or recommendations to Council on matters pertaining to court services would include reviewing a number of cases coming to the municipal judges and how they were being handled.

Councilmember Seekings said that he thought it was important for City Council to be informed about the form and function of what went on in the judicial side of the City. They should know the case load and things like pending cases. Having some idea and some reporting function to City Council via Committee was important. They hadn't done that, although they talked about it a lot. He would still like a Judiciary Committee, but if the Public Safety Committee could expand its role to be the clearing house for information from the court system, that would be satisfactory.

Chairman Shahid said that the idea would be to not create a new committee, but expand the Public Safety Committee to address those issues. Councilmember Shahid said that item c, where it said 'shall involve recommendations to Council on all matters' should be added to and it should include 'receiving information about and providing recommendations'. They couldn't provide recommendations if they didn't have the information. That would give them the ability to ask questions and pass recommendations to Council. If it included the municipal court system as well, that would be satisfactory to him.

Ms. Herdina said that any issue regarding discipline or misconduct of the judges would be a matter considered by the Office of Disciplinary Council and the Judicial Commission. That would not be in the purview, but they could add in court operations. They could change the name of the Committee. Councilmember Seekings said he thought they should to make it clear that it was public safety and court administration.

Councilmember Lewis said he thought they needed to go back over the ordinance and discuss this at another time. There were a lot of things they could cover in Public Safety that they didn't look at. They could go through it at another meeting.

On the motion of Councilmember Lewis, seconded by Mayor Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to defer the above item to the next meeting.

### **Update on Racial Bias Audit**

Deferred.

**Municipal Buildings Security (in wake of Virginia Beach shooting)**

Deferred.

**Executive Session in accordance with S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(a)(2) to receive legal advice regarding City vs. Kacey Jay. Action may or may not be taken.**

Mayor Tecklenburg said that the reason for this introduction was to close what they perceived was a loophole in the State law that allowed a driver to drive away without a violation if there was no injury.

On the motion of Mayor Tecklenburg, seconded by Councilmember Lewis, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Legal Department to draft an ordinance that would address and accident in any nature so that a motorist had the obligation to stop at the scene of the obligation regardless if there was injury or no injury and regardless as to what the motorist may have struck.

**Executive Session in accordance with S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(a)(2) to discuss a personnel matter. Action may or may not be taken. (Requested by Councilmember Seekings)**

On the motion of Mayor Tecklenburg, seconded by Councilmember Seekings, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 3:41 p.m.

On the motion of Mayor Tecklenburg, seconded by Councilmember Lewis, the Committee voted unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 4:13 p.m.

Chairman Shahid said that no action had been taken while in Executive Session.

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Bethany Whitaker  
Council Secretary