CITY OF CONWAY
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY & PARKS & ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT:  Mayor Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy, William Goldfinch, Mayor Pro Temp, Shane Hubbard, and Larry White

STAFF:  Adam Emrick, City Administrator, John Rogers, Deputy Administrator/ Grants & Special Project Director, Ashley Smith, Recreation Director; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief, Dale Long, Police Chief, Taylor Newell, Public Information Officer, Barbara Tessier, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER:  Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:  Motion: Hubbard made a motion, seconded by White, to approve the September 3, 2019 meeting agenda.  Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A.  Public Safety – June 10, 2019
B.  Parks & Administration – July 1, 2019

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Hubbard, to approve the June 10, 2019 Public Safety Committee minutes and the July 1, 2019 Parks & Administration Committee minutes.  Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A.  Discussion of bid for concessions at the Recreation Center.  A. Smith informed committee that running the concession stand was not a profitable venture as it was now being done having City staff stock products and run the concessions stand. An RFP was sent to three vendors to furnish inventory and run the concessions at the Recreation Center. Of the three, only one, Biz Focus LLC, responded. An outside vendor would be able to provide more food options such as fries and carnival-type foods. Because the concession stand does not have a hood system, a grill be outside in a fenced area to cook hamburgers and hot dogs. The concession stand will be open during practices and games. They will compensate the City $16.00 per registered participant which, based on the number of registered participants, would be $15,648 for the fall season and again for baseball season. If tournaments are held, Biz Focus LLC will compensate the City with an additional 10% of revenues. Staff recommends accepting the bid from Biz Focus LLC to furnish
concessions at the Recreation Center. **Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch, to bring this to Council with the Committee’s approval. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**B. Discussion of reducing pickleball rates to $2.00.** A. Smith informed the Committee that the pickleball community has requested the rate be lowered from $5.00 per visit to $2.00 per visit. Staff would like to encourage more players to attend the facility and participate in the “fastest growing sport in the country.” The City of Myrtle Beach has a fee of $2.00. The Recreation Center has a steady flow of players on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. There was a concern that if the rates were not decreased that players would drop their membership to the Rec Center. Smith commented that most of the players also used the pool and other facilities.

Another concern was adding additional pickleball courts in the City. Emrick noted there had been discussion about putting pickleball courts in at Collins Park now that the Collins Park building had been removed. The hesitation is that the riverfront and Tennis Center need to be completed first. A budget of approximately $200,000 would be needed to install the courts. Smith was asked if Conway needed more pickleball courts. Smith replied that if people from other areas, such as Carolina Forest, started to come to play in Conway they might be, but that currently there was no rush to provide more courts. Smith also noted that he would rather see the pickleball times be 1-4 p.m. instead of 9 a.m. to noon.

Discussion regarding the Recreation Center being self-supporting financially, and discussion on possibly revamping the fees was had.

**Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to hold this topic in abeyance until such time that Smith has time to study all the ramifications of revamping Recreation Center fees. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Review of Police Department Items.** Chief Long provided the committee with a review of police activities for the last seven months ending July 31st. There were 568 collisions with 298 injuries, 15,982 calls for service that required 1,852 reports, 895 arrests, 6,006 citations/warnings, and 54 guns recovered or seized.

There were 35 crime watch meetings with a total of 1,162 attendees. There were 9 weeks or Camp Great and 10 weeks of basketball camp.
There are 8 Explorers who assist with events like Cram-a-Cruiser, Special Olympics events, the Christmas parade and Riverfest. The Explorers each averaged approximately 62 hours of volunteer time last year. Four Citizens Police Academy classes have been completed with a total of 61 graduates. Applications for the next session that begins on October 3rd are available.

The department conducts foot patrols in the downtown business district and areas with high calls for service. Bike patrols are conducted city-wide. Golf carts also do patrols in the downtown district.

A Christmas to Remember event is entering its 3rd year. In 2018, 20 children were selected by school administrators from Conway’s 5 schools.

The department currently has the following vacancies: one Class 3 officer, one corporal and one sergeant. Conway police officers annually average 200 hours per officer of continuing education.

B. Overview of National Trends in “people-centered” policing. Blain-Bellamy commented that one of the things that gave her the most pride was the City’s investment in our future by what we are doing with our youth. The City has had the xxxxx program and then started jobs for youth in limited numbers. The kids learned the value of work and how to manage money, and hopes that the City stays focused in that direction. The xxx program should be expanded.

Blain-Bellamy commented on what “people-centered policing” actually is. She noted that she had gone around Columbia to see how it has been adopted there. The police are making face-to-face contacts with their citizens. Rookie officers, during their first few weeks, walk their beat instead of using a vehicle. This gives residents a chance to make a connection with the officers.

Columbia’s summer camps are much like Conway’s, but on a larger scale. Each camp has a different focus. One of the camps, on the day I was present, focused on reading using one of the book’s character’s to come and talk to the kids. There is a great deal of interaction between the Recreation Department and the Police Department when it comes to the camps; however, the Police presence was greater because they were building trust in the community, and it might awaken the desire in the kids to lean toward policing as a career.

Another thing that Columbia does is to have Police briefings at the beginning of the shifts at various locations around the community.

Blain-Bellamy asked that the City Police Department look at ways to improve “people-centered” policing in Conway. Long mentioned that during this last year, they had brought in civilian staff and it worked very well.
ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this ______ day of October, 2019.

[Signature]
Barbara A. Tessier, City Clerk