

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

December 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

[Watch Live on YouTube](#)

Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



Virtual Participation: Individuals who wish to participate in the meeting via Zoom may call (843) 768-9121 or email Pete Wiggins pwiggins@townofseabrookisland.org for log-in information prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL & FOIA STATEMENT

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

- September 17, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- November 19, 2024

3. OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

- NONE

4. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

- NONE

5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

- Citizen Comments
- Committee member concerns and/or unscheduled items
- Next Regular Meeting will be held on January 21st, 2025

6. ADJOURNMENT

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

September 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

[View Meeting on YouTube](#)

Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kortvelesy called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chairman Dan Kortvelesy; Committee members John Kinne, Virginia "Lark" Asbelle, and Leslie Baylis.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Katharine Watkins (Assistant Town Administrator), Abigail Grooms (Communications Manager), and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

Ms. Watkins confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all persons requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kinne made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2024, meeting, seconded by Ms. Baylis.

The prior meeting minutes were approved with two ayes and two abstentions.

Ms. Baylis and Ms. Asbelle abstained from voting due to their absence from the August meeting.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Beach Patrol Presentation
Review

The committee discussed the Beach Patrol presentation from the August 20th meeting. Mr. Kortvelesy discussed the difficulty of patrol staff policing the beach northwest of the Seabrook Island Club.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked the committee about their feelings related to the Beach Patrol providing a year-round safety patrol. He stated that most safety violations issued by patrol staff are issues that are present every month of the year.

Mr. Kinne asked what the current patrol schedule is. Mr. Cronin stated that April 1 through September 30 is the start and end of the beach

patrol season. Ms. Asbelle, based on the off-season activity described by Mr. Cronin, stated she didn't see the need for a year-round patrol.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated he was in support of a reduced patrol in the off-season, but wanted a safety presence on the beach for all twelve months of the year.

Mr. Kinne voiced a concern that the current provider of the beach patrol may not be able to hire and retain enough qualified staff to provide a year-round service. There was continued discussion related to employers on Seabrook Island hiring and retaining qualified staff.

Ms. Baylis asked Mr. Cronin about the budget implications of providing a year-round beach patrol. He said at present, the Town has not budgeted for a year-round patrol. To accommodate a request for a year-long patrol, funds would have to be taken from other priorities.

SJFD Presentation Review

The committee had a brief discussion related to the Strategic Plan update provided by Chief Kunitzer at the meeting of August 20th.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS 2025 Budget Needs

Mr. Cronin discussed the FY 2025 proposed budget as it relates to the Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Kinne asked if there was a specific portion of the FY 2025 budget that was dedicated to capital expenditures. Mr. Cronin stated that capital projects and any associated expenditures are spread across several different funds. Mr. Kinne asked about capital projects related to the beach patrol. Mr. Cronin stated that there is a vehicles line item in the FY 2025 budget, but that the Town was not proposing any capital expenditures related to vehicles.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked about the feasibility of installing LSV passing lanes as part of the paving of Seabrook Island Road. Mr. Cronin stated that traffic engineers would need to look at the idea from the viewpoint of safety. Mr. Cronin further stated that the idea may seem simple, but that utility relocation may be required as well as a redesign of the plans. The committee further discussed the inherent danger of allowing LSV's along Seabrook Island Road.

Ms. Baylis asked Mr. Cronin if there was a stormwater drainage plan associated with the new MUSC facility. She stated that she was concerned that persistent runoff of stormwater may affect the Town's plans to pave Seabrook Island Road. Mr. Cronin stated there was a drainage plan.

Mr. Kinne asked how high the road needs to be elevated to reduce flooding. Mr. Cronin stated that the elevation needed varies. He stated some parts of the road would need to be raised by eighteen inches.

Comprehensive Emergency
Plan Update

Mr. Kortvelesy stated to the committee that it had been several years since the Comprehensive Emergency Plan had been updated. He stated it was his wish to shorten the plan.

Mr. Cronin stated that the Town had grown since the last update. He stated that the largest need was to redefine the roles as written in the current plan.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked each member of the committee to look through the previous plan, find items that need updating, and bring those items back to the committee. He also stated that it was not his wish for the committee to rewrite the prior plan.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Asbelle asked the committee if they had received any phishing emails. Mr. Kortvelesy and Ms. Baylis said they had received suspicious emails.

Mr. Kinne addressed the issue of political signs on the beach. He asked Mr. Cronin if there were any ordinances the Town could enforce to have those signs removed. Mr. Kinne stated there was a banner on the beach he brought to the attention of Mr. Kortvelesy.

Mr. Cronin stated if the sign or banner was unattended, it could be removed. Mr. Cronin stated that each flag/sign/banner would have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:26 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

October 16, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

[View Meeting on YouTube](#)

Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kortvelesy called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chairman Dan Kortvelesy; Committee members John Kinne (Virtual), and Leslie Baylis, and Ed Maher.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Abigail Grooms (Communications Manager), and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

Mr. Wiggins confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all persons requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Maher made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2024, meeting, seconded by Ms. Baylis.

The meeting minutes of May 14, 2024, were approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Kinne made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2024, meeting, seconded by Mr. Maher.

Mr. Kinne asked Mr. Kortvelesy if these, more detailed minutes, would be the standard going forward. Mr. Kortvelesy said he noted the same style, but that he and the Town Clerk would discuss the minutes in the near future.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Mr. Kinne if there was anything in the minutes he had reviewed that could be misleading. Mr. Kinne said he had not noticed anything.

Mr. Cronin said that as someone who regularly reviews minutes, he likes to see more detail. He also stated the reason the minutes had become so general was the workload being imposed on the prior Town Clerk/Assistant Town Administrator.

Mr. Kinne reminded the committee members when they asked these questions of prior Town Attorney's, their advice was that the minutes should be kept general.

Mr. Kortvelesy said he would meet with the Town Clerk and find a happy medium on the minutes going forward.

The meeting minutes of May 21, 2024, were approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Maher made a motion to approve the minutes of July 16, 2024, seconded by Mr. Kinne.

The meeting minutes of July 16, 2024, were approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Kinne made a motion to approve the minutes of August 20, 2024, seconded by Mr. Maher.

The meeting minutes of August 20, 2024, were approved UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS
CCSO Update

Deputy Thomas Junkin gave a report on law enforcement activity on and around Seabrook Island.

He stated that call volume coming from Seabrook Island has been down recently, but that traffic enforcement on Seabrook Island Road would be increasing.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Deputy Junkin how the county's dispatch center handles commercial and residential alarm calls. The Deputy stated that the alarm company will attempt to reach the property owner. If the owner provides their password to the alarm company, a service call would not be initiated by the sheriff's office. In the event they cannot provide the password, a sheriff's deputy will go to the address of the alarm and confirm that everything is secure.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if most of the tickets issued for speeding on Seabrook Island Road resulted in a warning or a citation. Deputy Junkin stated that the penalty is up to the discretion of the officer.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if any citations or warnings were issued to LSV's. Deputy Junkin stated he was aware of one instance. He stated the LSV was operated by an underage driver.

Mr. Cronin asked Deputy Junkin about an issue that residents were having with coyotes. He stated that one individual said they were going to carry a gun with them everywhere and if they saw a coyote they were going to shoot it.

The deputy stated it was unlawful to discharge a firearm within city limits. He said that would make it unlawful for that individual to discharge a weapon on Seabrook Island.

Deputy Junkin urged staff to forward the issue to the SCDNR.

FY 2025 Budget

Mr. Cronin stated he contacted the Town's beach patrol provider to get a quote for year-round patrols. He stated they had not responded as of the current meeting date. Further, Mr. Cronin stated that the FY 2025 budget did not have funds for a year-round patrol. He stated that a year-round patrol would require another \$150,000.

Mr. Kinne left the meeting at 10:57 am.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that in lieu of a year-round safety patrol, he was working to ensure there was money in the FY 2025 budget to install new beach signage. He stated he wanted to install signage at every boardwalk to advise swimmers of potential dangers like rip currents.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated he spoke to Ben Webster of Charleston County Emergency Management about upgrading radios the Town currently owns.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Mr. Cronin about the possibility of changing emergency notifications providers. Mr. Cronin stated he would need to see when the contract period is up with the Town's current provider.

SIPOA Safety & Security

Mr. Kortvelesy asked the committee to brainstorm safety topics that could be discussed at the November meeting. He said representatives from SIPOA's Safety & Security committee would be in attendance.

Comprehensive Emergency Plan Update

Mr. Cronin asked the committee to review the FEMA guide for local government entities for drafting emergency plans. He stated the guide establishes a framework for a layered cooperation between local, state, and federal entities.

Mr. Cronin stated the largest need in updating the plan was changing the emergency organizational structure. He stated when the plan was drafted, the Town had three full-time staff. He went on to say that the roles and responsibilities were mainly assigned to members of the committee and council. He stated the new plan should assign most of those responsibilities to staff rather than elected officials.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated his wish for the new plan was a new risk assessment. He also stated that data gathered from the last valid census, considering the plan is fifteen years old, should be updated.

Mr. Cronin stated that the Charleston County Comprehensive Emergency Plan was a good plan on which to model the Town's emergency plan.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated the committee should hold a two or three hour work session where the committee can collaborate with the Disaster Recovery Council and SIPOA.

Ms. Baylis recommended that the committee collaborate with other entities for help as the committee and staff begin to draft the new emergency plan. She stated that other entities could advise the town on issues and/or pitfalls to avoid.

Mr. Maher asked a question as to the nature of the rewrite of the emergency plan. He asked whether it was going to be an update of the 2009 plan, or whether the committee needed to think about a larger rewrite. Mr. Cronin stated that personally, he would rather the committee and staff approach the new emergency plan as a total rewrite.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

There were no committee comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:43 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

November 19, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

[View Meeting on YouTube](#)

Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kortvelesy called the meeting to order at 9:58 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chairman Dan Kortvelesy; Committee members John Kinne, Virginia "Lark" Asbelle, and Leslie Baylis.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator) and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

Mr. Wiggins confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all persons requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Resignation of Ed Maher

Mr. Kortvelesy announced the resignation of Ed Maher from the Public Safety Committee. He stated that Mr. Maher had devoted a significant portion of his time to the Public Safety Committee and the Town of Seabrook Island. Mr. Kortvelesy stated he accepted his resignation with regret. He went on to say that Mr. Maher's institutional knowledge as well as Mr. Maher himself will be greatly missed.

Appointment of John Kinne as Vice-Chairman

Mr. Kortvelesy nominated John Kinne as Vice-Chairman, replacing Mr. Maher. The committee unanimously voted in favor of his appointment.

Mr. Cronin gave a brief report to the committee on how Mr. Maher's replacement will be selected. He stated that the Town has a pool of volunteer applications from prior openings. He stated there are also various openings on other boards, commissions, and committees that will attract additional volunteer applications. He urged anyone interested to go to the Town's website and complete an application. Mr. Cronin stated that the ordinance requires Mr. Kortvelesy to make a recommendation to town council, and then council will make the appointment. Mr. Cronin hoped that the appointment would be made at the December meeting of town council.

SJFD Update

Chief Kunitzer gave a brief report on the activities of the St. John's Fire District (SJFD) since the last meeting. He stated that some staff were sent to Greenville County, South Carolina to help with Hurricane Helene recovery. He stated that staff learned several things that will help them when responding to potential emergencies on Seabrook Island. He stated that communication is always a challenge when responding to larger emergencies. He stated the district has made investments in Starlink which can serve as an added line of communication for staff, but also for residents after any potential disaster.

Chief Kunitzer announced that SJFD had advertised a request for proposal to procure a highwater vehicle that could be used in highwater rescues on Seabrook Island. He stated that the district had selected a contractor, and that the vehicle will be built in Texas. He stated the vehicle will be completed in twenty months. Chief Kunitzer stated that the bids came in under what the district had budgeted. He said this will allow the district to customize equipment that will be included on the vehicle. The chief assured the committee that the vehicle will be housed on Seabrook Island.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if there would be newer technology developed that would make Starlink obsolete in the coming years. Chief Kunitzer stated that Starlink is powered by internet wi-fi. He stated that wi-fi was standard and probably not going anywhere anytime soon. He stated he believed the recent investments the district had made in wi-fi communications was wise.

Ms. Asbelle asked if the Town should be coordinating their communications with the district for ease of use. Chief Kunitzer said it depends on what kind of emergency that staff is responding. He stated there are variables like location of staff and if the Seabrook Island Town Hall is operational. He stated that the district uses satellite phones. Mr. Cronin stated the Town is in possession of satellite phones, but the phones have not been used. He reminded the committee that iPhone 15 and newer has the same satellite capabilities.

Mr. Kinne asked the committee a question related to a medivac helicopter service to which the Town has a contract. Mr. Cronin stated that the contract provides a medical helicopter service to any resident or property owner of Seabrook Island provided the flight originates in Charleston County. Mr. Cronin further stated that individuals can purchase additional coverage that would provide a nationwide service.

CCSO Update

Deputy Junkin gave an update of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office's (CCSO) activity on Seabrook Island since the last meeting.

Deputy Junkin shared call data with the committee and staff. Mr. Kortvelesy asked the deputy to define "patrols" in the data. Deputy

Junkin stated that “patrols” refers to an officer proactively patrolling a particular neighborhood or street. He stated a patrol is not initiated by a call from a resident, rather it is an officer proactively monitoring an area.

Deputy Junkin was asked about the coordination that exists between CCSO and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA). He stated that the biggest issue both entities continue to see is the coyote population. But he said communication and coordination between the two entities is good.

Heather Paton of SIPOA stated that there are resources posted on SIPOA’s website related to coyotes. She stated residents can find information on what to do if you encounter a coyote. SIPOA staff urged residents to call the gatehouse if a coyote is seen. Deputy Junkin stated that from his experience, the coyotes are most common near Camp St. Christopher and near the Equestrian Center.

Mr. Kinne asked the deputy if he was aware of any traffic stops involving LSV’s. Deputy Junkin stated he was aware of one stop of an LSV on Seabrook Island Road for suspected underage drivers.

Ms. Asbelle asked the deputy if he had seen an increase in cybercrimes. He stated that cybercrimes are on the increase because it is a relatively easy crime to commit undetected. There was a discussion that followed related to what individuals can do to protect themselves from being a victim of cybercrime.

SIPOA Safety & Security

SIPOA staff asked a question related to the potential passing of ordinances administering to short-term rentals (STR). SIPOA staff urged the Town to forward any issues normally under the jurisdiction of SIPOA to SIPOA so that they may respond accordingly.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked SIPOA staff about plans to place speeding signs around Seabrook Island. SIPOA staff stated they do have plans to place the signs around the island although they do not make the exact locations public. Heather Paton stated they will also gather data from the signs such as how many vehicles pass a particular sign, the time at which a vehicle passes a sign, and how fast the vehicle was traveling.

Susan Ferland of SIPOA asked a question related to enforcement of certain livability issues currently being considered by the town council. Mr. Kortvelesy stated that consideration of the ordinance has been postponed until January, but that he shared her concern. Mr. Cronin stated that a common complaint is that in the cases of nuisance properties that continually break rules, why the Town does not restrict their ability to rent the property. He stated that even though those livability issues fall under the jurisdiction of SIPOA, the Town must have

a similar ordinance if the Town is expected to suspend or in some cases revoke their STR permit.

Ms. Ferland asked about beach patrol specifically. She stated that she saw verbal and written warnings, but no citations given. She inquired as to whether the Town had a mechanism in which to issue citations. Mr. Cronin stated that he was aware of a citation issued in the summer of 2024. Mr. Cronin also stated that code enforcement will not automatically issue a citation for a first offense. He said they will typically issue a verbal, then written warning, then an ordinance summons, if necessary.

Ms. Baylis proposed that renters be required to sign a document acknowledging they have read the Town's and SIPOA's rules regarding livability issues like leaving out garbage cans and/or parking on the grass. She proposed that SIPOA issue a citation for renters breaking rules and she also would like to see rental companies be held accountable for rule breaking as well.

Ms. Paton of SIPOA reminded the committee that there is a mechanism through which the property owner can be held responsible for rule breaking by their renters. She also confirmed that these types of citations and fines have been enforced in the past.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Ms. Paton a question related to SIPOA hiring and retaining enforcement staff. Ms. Paton said she currently has two spots open. She said there are two main challenges to hiring staff. She stated that by the time that SIPOA reviews applications and contacts the potential employee, they have already found gainful employment. She also stated that the requirements of the job are a challenge for most potential employees. She stated that most individuals see the job as "an argument."

Mr. Cronin stated the Town has similar challenges considering that multiple entities are recruiting for the same roles.

Mr. Cronin stated for SIPOA staff that the ordinance amending the beach rules to accommodate the beach scraping project would expire on the evening of November 22nd. Mr. Cronin said the beach rules would return to normal beginning on Saturday, November 23rd.

COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY PLAN

Mr. Kortvelesy reminded the committee that they would begin working on the comprehensive emergency plan after the holidays.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

There were no committee comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:52 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk