

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

July 15, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

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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 10:03 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Dan Kortvelesy, Chairman; Leslie Baylis, and Dr. Carl Bergren.

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

FOIA STATEMENT

The Clerk/Treasurer 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 others requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 15, 2025

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

Ms. Baylis made a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, seconded by Mr. Kortvelesy.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Mr. Cronin if the town had applied through South Carolina's Emergency Management Division for re-entry passes to access Seabrook Island after a natural disaster.

Mr. Cronin stated the town was not eligible to receive a pass through the state portal. He stated he would contact Charleston County Emergency Management and see how they would prefer the town proceed.

The motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

St. John's Fire District (SJFD) Update

Chief Ryan Kunitzer of SJFD updated the committee on the purchase of a new fire engine that will be stationed on Seabrook Island. He stated this will bring the number of equipment ordered that will primarily

serve Seabrook Island to three. He stated that SJFD will take possession of the new engine in early fall of 2025.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Chief Kunitzer if he had anything to say to the committee related to the recent Disaster Recovery Council (DRC) drill.

Chief Kunitzer stated that the conversations that were had at the drill were useful. He stated he does have some concerns about the availability of resources and that his agency, the town, and Charleston County should remain engaged.

CCSO Update

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Sergeant Thomas Junkin for an update on traffic enforcement along Seabrook Island Road.

Sergeant Junkin stated that since June 1, there have been two increased traffic enforcement events, and each of those events led to warnings and citations.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if the traffic enforcement unit is separate from other functions of the sheriff's office.

Sergeant Junkin stated the traffic enforcement unit is a separate patrol entity.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if the traffic enforcement unit had data that could be shared with the committee to address resident concerns.

Sergeant Junkin stated he could request the last thirty days of data from the traffic enforcement division.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if Sergeant Junkin had any knowledge of a sign placed at the Kiawah Island Town Hall advising residents and visitors of ongoing traffic enforcement events.

Sergeant Junkin stated that the sign was owned by the town. He stated that traffic enforcement on Kiawah Island is a collaborative effort amongst the sheriff's office and the Kiawah Island Community Association. He closed by saying there is no dedicated effort to enforce traffic laws on the island twenty-four hours per day.

Dr. Bergren asked a question related to the most frequent reason for calls for service.

Sergeant Junkin stated after traffic enforcement, agency assist calls are the most common. He stated these calls are CCSO assisting other agencies such as SJFD and EMS. He also commented that during the summer months, calls for lost individuals, especially on the barrier

islands are common. Sergeant Junkin closed by saying that 911 hangups and false security alarms continue to be an issue.

A representative of SIPOA asked if LSV's are pulled over on the public portion of Seabrook Island Road.

Sergeant Junkin stated that if a patrol officer sees a safety violation on an LSV, the officer will make a courtesy stop of the LSV.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Sergeant Junkin if the act of impeding traffic is a traffic violation.

Sergeant Junkin stated that if an LSV cannot maintain the posted speed limit and is impeding traffic behind, the LSV must pull over and allow others to pass.

The SIPOA representative asked Sergeant Junkin if the Sheriff's Office could be involved with SIPOA in an inspection campaign of LSV's on Seabrook Island.

Sergeant Junkin stated that CCSO is already participating in similar campaigns around Charleston County. He stated that patrol officers can issue traffic summons' for safety infractions.

Dr. Bergren asked if the committee should recommend the town post signage along Seabrook Island Road advising LSV drivers to pull over so that faster traffic may pass.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that the LSV issue was not going to be decided today, but that his recommendation should be part of the discussion.

Ms. Baylis asked if SIPOA security officers are stopping LSV, and if so, is that data being recorded.

The SIPOA representative stated that the data is published monthly in "Currents".

**Disaster Awareness Day
Review**

Mr. Kortvelesy thanked all of the speakers, presenters, and partner agencies that attended Disaster Awareness Day.

DRC Review

Mr. Kortvelesy thought the DRC scenario was very useful and he thanked the partner agencies from around Seabrook Island that attended.

Dr. Bergren asked if an evacuation order is enforceable by law.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that evacuation orders would be issued by the governor, but that evacuation orders are not enforceable.

Dr. Bergren commented that based on his past experience, evacuation orders should be emphasized so that air or water rescues are not necessary after a devastating storm.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated this issue was discussed at Disaster Awareness Day.

Ms. Baylis asked about issues related to renters remaining on the island after an evacuation order has been given.

Mr. Cronin stated that the Short-Term Rental ordinances that were passed earlier this year include language requiring renters to leave in the event of an evacuation. He stated that in the event a renter defies an evacuation order, the town can revoke the rental permit of that property.

Dr. Bergren stated he had an issue with property owners being held responsible for the indiscretions of their renters.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that a portion of the SIPOA covenant contains language stating that renters are guests of the property owner and the owner is responsible for the behavior of their guests.

Low Speed Vehicles (LSV)

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that at the June meeting of the town council, council members discussed prohibiting LSV's on the public portion of Seabrook Island Road. He stated that the most often heard complaint is an LSV impeding traffic and creating an unsafe situation.

Mr. Kortvelesy commented on Ms. Baylis' remarks related to raising the speed limit on Seabrook Island Road, thus prohibiting LSV's on the road. He stated that if there is no safety enforcement now, if the speed limit is raised, there may not be a way to enforce the prohibition later. He further commented that it was his opinion that accommodations for LSV traffic should be included in the coming project to raise Seabrook Island Road.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that he has heard from residents on both sides of the LSV issue. He stated that he does not currently own an LSV, and that he is trying to be fair to those who do and do not own an LSV. He stated the true size of the LSV issue wasn't immediately clear to him. He commented it is for this reason that he would like to see enforcement data.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated that given the town is preparing the FY2026 budget, it might be nice to purchase a sign similar to Kiawah Island's.

Mr. Cronin stated the town could rent a sign. He stated that it was his opinion that traffic advisory signs should not be placed permanently due to their unsightly nature, but ultimately, the placing of a sign is a policy decision up to the council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chairman Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:42 am.