

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

April 15, 2025 @ 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 10:03 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chairman Dan Kortvelesy; Committee members Virginia "Lark" Asbelle, John Kinne, and Dr. Carl Bergren.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Abby Grooms (Communications & Events Manager), 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 other persons requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 18, 2025

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

Mr. Kinne made a motion to approve the minutes from the Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting of March 18, 2025, seconded by Ms. Asbelle.

The motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

Meeting with Phillips and Jordan

Mr. Kortvelesy asked Mr. Cronin if staff had contacted Phillips and Jordan representatives requesting their presence at a future Public Safety Committee meeting.

Mr. Cronin stated he had not spoken with them in the last thirty to sixty days, but said he would reach out again and ask for their availability.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Ben Webster, Charleston County Emergency Management

Ben Webster, Deputy Director of Charleston County Emergency Management, gave a presentation to the committee covering how his

department works to ensure the safety of residents before, during, and after a disaster.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if Charleston County's emergency alert system was similar to the alert system utilized by The Town of Seabrook Island.

Mr. Webster stated that the county uses Everbridge. He stated users can go to the Charleston County website and "opt-in" to receive alerts from Charleston County Emergency Management. He stated that his department can also utilize Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). He stated WEA's utilize cell phone records and pushes alerts to cell phones in a geographic area based on that data. He stated he uses WEA's in a case where there is an imminent threat to life or property. He finally stated that the software utilized by the Town of Seabrook Island (CodeRed) is similar to Everbridge.

Mr. Webster stated at the present time, if residents wanted to receive alerts from the town as well as Charleston County, they would need to sign up for both Everbridge and CodeRed.

Committee member Leslie Baylis entered the meeting at 10:21 am.

Ms. Asbelle asked if there were any shelters in Charleston County.

Mr. Webster stated there are a number of schools that serve as shelters, and six of them are built to withstand a Category 3 hurricane.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if evacuations zones are drawn to account for partial evacuations.

Mr. Webster stated that if only the coastal zone is evacuated, there may be a lesser presence of law enforcement at key intersections.

Ms. Asbelle asked if Charleston County manages the order of evacuation.

Mr. Webster stated the county does not get involved in what neighborhoods evacuate first. He urged residents to prepare to leave as soon as an evacuation order is given.

Dr. Bergren asked when Palmetto EOC would be available to enter resource requests.

Mr. Webster stated that as soon as staff determine that resources may be needed related to a disaster, a disaster "event" is created in Palmetto EOC for municipalities to begin requesting resources.

Mr. Kortvelesy asked if the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA) can request resources through Charleston County Emergency Management.

Mr. Webster stated that the best way to request resources is through the town. He stated the best way to ensure private organizations get the resources they need is to contract with private entities for emergency response (e.g., snow plowing, debris removal, etc.).

Mr. Kinne asked if anyone could apply for a Dash Pass for re-entry onto Seabrook Island after a disaster.

Mr. Webster stated that only licensed businesses were eligible to apply.

Ms. Asbelle asked if the state shares pass holders' information with the local municipalities.

Mr. Webster stated they do not. He stated that local law enforcement will still control who has access to the island and who does not. He stated that pass holders and those with a Seabrook Island address will be able to access the island after it is safe to return.

Ms. Asbelle asked who has the responsibility of maintaining trees along popular routes of evacuation.

Mr. Webster stated the majority of the responsibility rests with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). He stated the SCDOT is primarily concerned with the clearance of the tree canopy above the roadway, which is 16'.

Mr. Wiggins asked if Charleston County had a plan to make permitting easier for building contractors after a disaster.

Mr. Webster stated he could not speak to specifics, but stated that Charleston County Building Services will absolutely make it easier to obtain permits in response to a disaster.

Disaster Awareness Day

Mr. Kortvelesy reminded the committee that Seabrook Island will be hosting Disaster Awareness Day on May 29.

Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP) Update

Mr. Kortvelesy reminded the committee that Scott Cave will be working on updating the town's CEP. He stated the committee discussed at the prior meeting, the plan should mirror Charleston County's emergency plan.

Dr. Bergren asked Mr. Webster when he anticipates the county's plan being completed.

Mr. Webster stated that the plan should be completed by July of 2026.

Mr. Kinne asked what the role of the Public Safety Committee will be in updating the CEP.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated his thought was the Public Safety Committee would be working with Scott Cave to update the CEP.

**Disaster Recovery Council
(DRC)**

Mr. Kortvelesy reminded the committee that the annual DRC preparedness drill is scheduled for June 17. He stated that Scott Cave, who will be leading the exercise, is waiting until after Disaster Awareness Day to finalize the scenario for the DRC drill.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

**2025 Atlantic Basin
Hurricane Forecast**

Mr. Kortvelesy urged the committee to read the 2025 Atlantic Basin hurricane forecast recently published in the Post and Courier.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Dr. Bergren commented that he recently saw a vehicle off the road with police assisting the driver.

SIPOA representatives stated the driver was avoiding a deer on Seabrook Island Road.

Mr. Kortvelesy stated the median installed in front of the SIPOA Lakehouse in an attempt to slow motorists seems to be working well.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chairman Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:21 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Clerk/Treasurer