

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtually Via Zoom

March 13, 2025; 11:00 AM

Minutes

I. **Call to Order:** *Chairman Berner called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.*

II. **Roll Call:**

Present via Zoom: Russell Berner, Chairman
Yvonne Johnstone
Steve Rolando
Adam Shubsda
Bill Thomae

Absent: Jim Harrington
Al Sines

Also Present: Craig Harris, *Public Safety Director*
Captain Eubanks, *Charleston County Sheriff's Office*
Fire Chief Kunitzer, *St. Johns Fire District*
Assistant Chief Palawasta, *Charleston County EMS*
Jody Forrest, *Kiawah Island Community Association*

Chairman Berner introduced the new member of the PSC, Adam Shubsda, the new Director of Security for KICA (Kiawah Island Community Association). He briefly introduced himself and expressed his excitement about joining the team.

III. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2025

Mr. Thomae made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2025, meeting. Mr. Shubsda seconded the motion, and it was approved.

IV. **Agency Updates (as required)**

A. Charleston County Sheriff's Department

Town of Kiawah Monthly Report	February	Year to Date
Number of all Written Report (excluding accident reports)	5	10
Accident Reports – Vehicle Mishaps	10	17
Number of Calls Handle Not Requiring a Report	66	119
Number of Traffic Stops	29	39
TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS HANDLED (dispatched/self-generated)	110	185
Written Warnings Issued	24	33
Traffic Citations Issued	5	6
Total Warnings and Citations Issued	29	39
Alarms	37	62
Specific Patrols Requests	132	213

Captain Eubanks provided the Sheriff Department's February monthly report, mentioning the recent traffic enforcement activities. The traffic unit blitz resulted in 155 citations and nine warnings, with an additional 48 citations and three warnings on another day. The citations were for speeding, no driver's license, expired tags, uninsured motor vehicle, driving under suspension, and DUI.

Captain Eubanks highlighted the success of the traffic enforcement efforts and expressed a desire to continue these activities in the future.

B. St. John’s Fire District

Kiawah Monthly										
Basic Incident Zone Number (FD1.32)	District 4				District 6					
Apparatus Resource ID (FD18.1)	E704	E706	L702	SQ701	E704	E706	L702	SQ701		
Basic Incident Type Category (FD1.21)									Count of Fire Incidents Grand Total	
									Percent of Count of Fire Incidents Grand Total	
1 - Fire					1	1	1		3	3.13%
3 - Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	7	2	9		8		6		32	33.33%
4 - Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	2	1	1	1	3	3			11	11.46%
5 - Service Call	3			2	2				7	7.29%
6 - Good Intent Call	3		1	2	1				7	7.29%
7 - False Alarm & False Call	5	2	6		1	11	11		36	37.50%
Grand Total	20	3	10	14	2	26	16	6	96	100%

Fire Chief Kunitzer provided updates on two significant incidents the St. Johns Fire District responded to: one on Key Island and another on Blue Heron Pond. The fire at the far northern end of the island, on Blue Heron Pond, was quickly contained due to a functioning alarm system. Upon arrival, the firefighters did a 360 assessment and found a fire on the back porch. They were able to get the fire under control quickly and keep it contained to the back porch, preventing any significant damage. The other fire on Caroline Shores, in Ocean Park, was called in by the property manager, who saw smoke while checking on the property. A small fire was discovered between the garage floor and the first floor, and quick actions prevented the fire from spreading.

Fire Chief Kunitzer reported on the following:

- The new style of reporting the incident statistics provides more data, including turnout times, and makes it easier to read.
- Paramedic squad 701 has been responding out of Station 4 for the last few months
- The deployment of several crews, along with the big truck, to Horry County to assist with brush fires.

Chairman Berner inquired about the cause of the fires. Fire Chief Kunitzer clarified that the fire on Carolina Shores was apparently due to rats or something chewing through wires in several spots, not the rumored EV charging stations.

C. Charleston County Emergency Medical Services

Countywide Response Data		Overall	Bravo thru Echo	Alpha	Bravo	Charlie	Delta	Echo
Incident Arrivals		19	15	4	4	7	4	0
% of All Responses		100.00%	78.95%	21.05%	21.05%	36.84%	21.05%	(Blank)
Average Arrivals Per Day		0.68	0.54	0.14	0.14	0.25	0.14	(Blank)
Average Response Time		00:13:52	00:14:03	00:13:12	00:11:17	00:16:42	00:12:13	
Fractile		47.37%	46.67%	50%	75%	43%	25%	0%
% > 20 Minute Response		15.79%	20.00%	0.00%	25.00%	28.57%	0.00%	(Blank)
% > 30 Minute Response		5.26%	6.67%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	(Blank)
Average Daily Total Staffing Hours		412.79						
Transport Units Only								
Average Daily Total Unit Type Hours		ALS 301.80	ADV 25.96	BLS 85.03				% Core BLS 24.79%
		Delta 75.87	Charlie 8.48	Alpha 3.81				% Core ADV 7.79%

Assistant Chief Palawasta apologized for technical difficulties and indicated that the report on the responses to the island had been provided prior to the meeting. He highlighted the slower winter months for EMS and the expected increase in activity with the arrival of spring.

Chairman Berner asked about the response to a single-vehicle accident outside of Cassique in which a car went off the road, hitting a tree, and was reported as being seriously injured. Assistant Chief Palawasta confirmed that EMS was present and mentioned respect for protecting the patient's privacy due to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations.

D. Beach Patrol

Mr. Edgerton provided an update on Beach Patrol activities:

- Ongoing hiring to prepare for the upstaffing process
- Training that began on March 1st for new hires and reoccurring employees
- The implementation of the new leash law that is now in effect, and the education campaign that occurred during the first two weeks to inform the public about the new leash law and the importance of compliance.
- The submitted statistics are more detailed and updated to reflect some of the littering and dumpster ordinance changes.

Chairman Berner inquired about the distribution of leash law violations, whether they were mostly at the Sandcastle, Beach Club, or random. Mr. Edgerton explained that the violations are evenly distributed along the beach but usually have more in more densely populated areas, like the Night Heron area and the Beachwalker area.

Chairman Berner inquired when the education campaign would end. Mr. Edgerton explained that once the long-standing March 15th effective date is reached, he felt that ample warning was given, and everyone should be in compliance by March 16th.

E. Kiawah Island Community Association

KICA Security Report Monthly Statistics: February 2024			
	2022	2023	2024
Deer Related Accidents (no personal injury)	1	0	0
False Residential Alarms	2	1	1
Vehicles passed through the Main Gate	146,206	150,338	161,995
Vehicles passed through the Vanderhorst Gate	86,779	92,171	96,632

Mr. Shubsda provided an overview of KICA's February stats, including the number of passes through the main gate, non-cost passes issued, and commercial vehicle passes. Special events and covenant violations were also noted.

Mr. Shubsda provided updates on the following:

- the upcoming kickoff of the KICA Safety and Security meeting on April 7th
- His participation in the successful *Meet and Greet* with residents, which will continue to provide more community contact
- The project to install blue reflectors for fire hydrants has begun
- Road paving operations are scheduled to start on March 31 and likely last until the end of April.
- Working on KICA's emergency operation manual and looking forward to collaborating with Mr. Harris and his team on not only the preparedness efforts but also the recovery efforts.
- Baseline data collection for speed and traffic on Duneside will be provided at the next meeting

V. Old Business:

None

VI. New Business:

A. Review and Recommendation of the AirMedCare Network Contract Renewal

Chairman Berner stated that a recommendation from the committee to renew the AirMed contract was needed for Town Council approval.

Mr. Thomae made a motion to recommend to the Town Council the approval of the AirMedCare contract renewal. Mr. Shubsda seconded the motion.

Chairman Berner discussed his concern that the contract covers those who reside within the boundaries of the Town, but on the website, it includes those who are part-time residents having an official residence elsewhere. He suggested editing the proposed contract so as to include that it will also cover people who are part-time on the island, as well as renters of the homes, to duplicate the wording that's on the website. He stated that the challenge with the change was that the Town was grandfathered in a Municipal Site Plan, which AirMedCare no longer offers at the current pricing.

Chairman Berner asked for a motion to approve the conditions discussed. Mr. Thomae expressed concern about making what he considered dramatic changes to the contract, questioning if it would put the contract at risk or if AirMedCare would react with a considerable increase in the price due to the significant increase in the number of people they would have to cover, and whether AirMedCare had been contacted about making that change, which they had not. Further discussion included whether "renters" would be defined as long-term renters or renters in general, with Chairman Berner indicating the intent would be to cover all renters, not defining or limiting to certain kinds of renters. The question was raised whether it was possible to delay making a recommendation until the questions had been answered. Mr. Harris noted the expiration date of the current agreement and said that it cannot expire. It was noted that at the time of the initial contract, the price was based on 1800 residents, and that the proposed changes would at least triple or quadruple that number.

Mr. Thomae made a motion to leave the contract as it stands, covering only full-time residents. Mr. Rolando seconded the motion. A roll call vote confirmed the unanimous approval.

Chairman Berner voted "Aye"

Ms. Johnstone voted "Aye"

Mr. Rolando voted "Aye"

Mr. Shubsda voted "Aye"

Mr. Thomae voted "Aye"

B. Sandy Point:

- Discussion regarding what to do or can be done with boaters who beach their boats at Sandy Point and violate Town Ordinances
- Drinking on the beach, cooking on the beach, no business license for commercial boats, open fires on the beach, dogs off the leash, walking in the dunes, sleeping overnight, bothering birds and wildlife, etc.
- Options can include:
 - Installing No Trespassing Signs
 - Increasing Staff to Enforce Ordinances
 - Placing Land in Conservation
 - Do Nothing

C. Discussion of the consequences of the Town's actions as well as non-action (for example, potential wildfire risk)

Chairman Berner introduced the discussion on Sandy Point, which began at the last Town Council meeting. The Mayor initiated licensing requirements for commercial boats transporting people to Sandy Point, and highlighted at the meeting were concerns about the potential risks of environmental damage, wildfire, liability exposure to the Town, and the impact on wildlife. Chairman Berner stated that the Council discussed some options, and since Sandy Point is within the Town's jurisdiction, he

asked the committee for their ideas or suggestions on what should be done, if anything. Various suggestions are made, including increased police presence, posting no trespassing signs, and monitoring the area for commercial activity. There was an in-depth discussion of the Sheriff's Office's Marine Patrol conducting drive-byes to deter activity and monitor the situation.

Mr. Edgerton discussed that Sandy Point is not a no-trespassing area but is under the jurisdiction of the town, with only state statutes enforceable, not necessarily the town ordinances. He noted that Marine Patrol goes through there pretty regularly, especially during the season, that Beach Patrol does respond if there is a call, and if requested, could coordinate patrolling that area. On the issue of wildfires, Fire Chief Kunitzer added that the STJFD has a fireboat with some small fire capabilities. He noted that his personal experiences while spending time at Sandy Point on his boat were mostly family activities, with occasional larger groups there as well as commercial vessels. There was further discussion of efforts that have been taken to stop the commercial access and the current Town ordinances that are enforceable, but only by Town Enforcement Officers, unless the state statutes mirror them.

Following the discussion, Chairman Berner requested that Captain Eubanks ask the Marine Patrol to do the drive-byes and report any feedback.

D. Discussion of the Creation of a Joint Sub-Committee with the Environmental Committee

E. Discussion Regarding Installation of a No U-Turn Sign at Kiawah Island Parkway Bridge Parking Area

Chairman Berner began the discussion regarding the installation of a No-U-Turn sign at the Parkway bridge by stating that there had been numerous comments and complaints about near accidents, where people who are driving onto the island do a U-turn in front of traffic so they can park at that parking area at the bridge. He asked the committee for ideas for what could be done to prevent the U-turns, if anything. Discussion included whether there have been incidents at that location, if signs are put out for enforcement, what kind of enforcement, and who would be enforcing it, needs to be considered. It was agreed to monitor the situation and revisit it if necessary.

VII. Chairman's Updates

None

VIII. Committee Members' Comments:

None

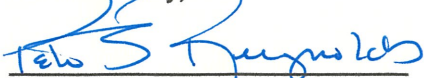
IX. Citizens' Comments:

None

X. Adjournment:

Mr. Thoma made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:16 pm. Mr. Rolando seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

9-22-2025

Date