



TOWN OF SURFSIDE BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
July 1, 2010 ♦ 4:00 P.M.

PUBLIC SAFETY SEPARATION
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The Public Safety Separation Subcommittee consists of three appointed members from council: Mr. Mark Johnson, Ms. Vicki Blair and Mr. Roderick Smith. All members were in attendance. Staff in attendance: Administrator Ms. Fellner, Town Clerk Ms. Pinnell; Police Captain Mr. Miller and Fire Chief Mr. Packard.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Mr. Smith made a motion to elect Mr. Johnson as the Chairman of the subcommittee. Ms. Blair seconded the motion. Mr. Johnson was made the Chairman of the subcommittee.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Ron Saunders, 313 6th Avenue S: “As you go through your deliberations and choices in what you do and don’t do and making this separation happen and what you do about choosing a new police chief, I would urge you very strongly to look for someone outside the town of Surfside Beach as a replacement for our Chief of Police. Not that anything is wrong with the people we have here now, but I think we need to bring people who have not been involved in the politics in this town. Bring those new people fresh to our town and let them work to make things as they should be here and that’s my public comment. Thank you.”

Mr. Harry Kohlmann, 1610 S. Ocean Blvd.: “I don’t know if, in this forum, we can ask questions or not. That’s a question.”

There was an agreement of the subcommittee to answer questions.

Mr. Kohlmann: “Just curious what this committee, this subcommittee is really going to do. Are they just looking at separating the fire department from the police department or are they looking at how the police department is run or how the fire department is run and possibly personnel and stuff like that?”

Mr. Smith: “We are going to be looking at the organization but not necessarily the people. We will be looking at the organization of how the police is organized and how the fire department is organized and how many people are on the staffs.”

Mr. Kohlmann: “OK, so, basically, I mean, there’s a lot of things going on. People are saying that possibly the police department is too top heavy and possibly has too many chiefs and not enough Indians. It was brought up at the town council meeting that possibly you should have some law enforcement experience on your subcommittee and you poo poo’d that, you said that’s no good. I know you’re all very intelligent people. I know that you know how to ask questions but I know you’ll be able to ask a few

52 questions. Will you know all the questions to ask? I don't know. I doubt it, but maybe
53 you will, but will you know the correct answers you're getting? Are the answers you're
54 getting correct? I mean, I know, you, Mr. Smith, was an engineer. My father was an
55 engineer for 50 years. I know a little about engineering but I really don't know all of it.
56 You're in insurance, know what? I might know a couple of questions but an insurance
57 guy can tell me something and 'oh, ok' and you're with DHEC and you know, I don't
58 know what DHEC does, so, I really wouldn't know what to ask. I think a fair thing for
59 the community and the police department is to have somebody who has some kind of
60 background knowledge; this is free. You had three people who volunteered for it and you
61 said 'no'. Do you know what the supervisor ratio should be? You know, how many
62 sergeants to every police officer? I mean they can tell you anything you want to hear and
63 you're going to go 'ok, they said that'. How are they deployed? What tours are they
64 deployed on? And this is just stuff I'm just thinking off the top of my head when I'm
65 driving here. Do we have enough police officers here or do we have too many; how can
66 you tell if we have too many or if we have enough? How many jobs do they go to? How
67 many jobs do they really go to?"

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69 **Mr. Johnson:** "Mr. Kohlman, to answer your questions. I think this committee is going
70 to take a look at all aspects. We're going to talk to people. This committee does not . . .
71 you're right we don't have the answers but we're going to try to get answers; we're going
72 to talk to department heads; we're going to talk to other police chiefs; we're going to talk
73 to individuals that live in the town who have volunteered their time and efforts and we're
74 going to try to do the best that we can. We may not be perfect but we're going to try to
75 get the answers."

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77 **Ms. Blair:** "I think everybody needs to remember that it's not just about the police
78 department. There is equal time to be spent on both of these departments and everyone
79 seems to be focusing so much on the police department and while I totally respect what
80 you're saying, I think that there are times in our life that we have to trust what people are
81 telling us. As I stated in some earlier meetings if I go the bank I trust them that they're
82 going to tell me what I need to do. If you ask an insurance person for some input you're
83 going to trust what they tell you and you seem to question that maybe we shouldn't trust
84 what they tell us."

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86 **Mr. Kohlmann:** "Being a police officer for 27 years, civilians, from what I see, you
87 really have not much of an idea of what we do and you don't know why we do it. I mean
88 I don't know how many millions of times I was asked 'why you do this, why you do that,
89 why don't you do this, why don't you do that'. So both for their sake and for your sake
90 to know what the real deal really is, I mean, you had a very good opportunity to use
91 people in this community for free."

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93 **Mr. Smith:** "Mr. Kohlmann, if you've got specific questions that we should ask. Why
94 don't you write them down for us and if you've got specific answers that you think
95 should be, write them down for us."

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97 **Mr. Kohlmann:** "I don't know what the answers should be. I'd have to be there when
98 the question's asked. It's not just writing all the correct answers to the questions down,
99 you have to know what the correct answer's going to be. You know, on the police
100 department side they might try to justify their existence because they don't want to lose

101 their job or they don't want their friend to lose a job. You have, just in equipment, I
102 don't know how many . . . I have no idea how many police officers are employed here,
103 how many sergeants are employed here, how many corporals. How many radio cars are
104 here, I mean, you can see there's 8 to 10 of them marked (***) radio cars sitting in the
105 parking lot. Well there's only like 3 or 4 guys on patrol. That's a lot of extra cars."

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107 **Mr. Johnson:** "Well, those specific questions, sir, are not for this subcommittee to
108 answer. I appreciate your concern, you have to realize we're just getting going on this
109 thing and you know; we'll see where it leads us."

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111 **Mr. Kohlmann:** "Before you said about personnel issues, so, I just thought that's what
112 you were looking at also."

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114 **Mr. Johnson:** "Well, that's one part of it; it's not the entire thing."

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116 **Mr. Kohlmann:** "Ok, thank you."

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118 **4. PRESENTATION**

119 *Administrators' Presentation.* Administrator Ms. Fellner stated that her presentation
120 contains some personnel matters adding that this would need to be discussed in executive
121 session.

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123 Mr. Johnson stated that he does not like executive sessions but some personnel issues
124 need to be discussed therefore, it is necessary at this time to go into executives session.
125 Mr. Smith made a motion to go into executive session. Ms. Blair seconded the motion.
126 All voted in favor.

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128 **5. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

129 FOIA 30-4-70 (A)(1) personnel issues

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131 **6. ADJOURNMENT**

132 Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Blair seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:00PM

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135 Approved:

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Sharon Pinnell, Town Clerk

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Mark L Johnson, Town Council

142 Roderick Smith, Town Council

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145 Vicki W. Blair, Town Council

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148 **Clerk's Note:** This document constitutes minutes of the meeting, which was audio taped. This meeting was transcribed by Clerk Pinnell.
149 In accordance with FOIA, meeting notice and the agenda were faxed and/or emailed to local media and interested parties. A complete
150 list is on file in the clerk's office. The agenda was posted on bulletin boards outside Council chambers and in the town hall reception
151 area. Meeting notice was also posted on the town marquee. When *** is used a section of the transcription is inaudible.