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Dates and Announcements

- *City Council will hold its regular meeting Monday, April 12th, @ 6:00pm in the Council Chambers*
- *The next City of Florence Update on the Kinard n' Koffee radio show is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, @ 8:10am*



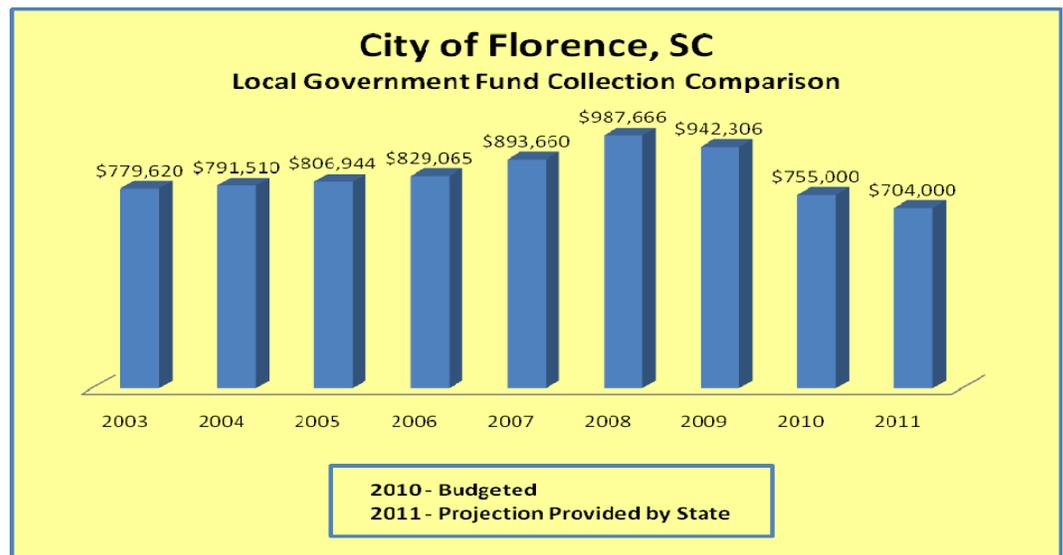
**Great American Cleanup
Saturday
March 27th**

Downward Trend Forecasted for Local Government Fund Collections

In budget deliberations last week, the House Ways and Means committee passed H4603 to allow the General Assembly to cut the Local Government Fund in the 2010-2011 budget below the previous year's level. Current law states the Fund can't be cut below last year's levels without separate legislation. The full House of Representatives has not debated H4603 yet.

Last week, the Ways and Means committee approved a \$5.1 billion state budget which is \$462 million less than appropriated last year. This includes a \$28 million cut (12 percent reduction) in the Local Government Fund from last year's level. This means a \$4.6 million cut to cities and towns.

The Ways and Means committee version of the budget goes to the House floor during the week of March 15.



In the current 2009-2010 budget, the State Legislature approved legislation that significantly cut the Local Government Fund for the City's current fiscal year. As indicated in the graph above, cuts by the State made in FY 2010 and anticipated for FY 2011 reduce this revenue source for the City General Fund to funding levels less than 9 years ago.

Police News

- The Police Department is experiencing an unexpected and unanticipated deficit in the prisoner housing line item of our current FY 2009 –2010 budget. Sometime shortly after July 1, 2009 the Department of Juvenile Justice reversed its decision which previously allowed juveniles 15 and 16 years of age, who were charged as adults, to be housed in the Florence County Detention Center. Since this option is no longer available, all juveniles must now be housed at the DJJ facility in Columbia. Previously, when indictments occurred, the juveniles being held at the Florence County Jail became the responsibility of the county and our obligation to pay for their housing was over. Since all juveniles now go to the Columbia facility, we continue to be responsible for their housing even after indictments are handed down by the Grand Jury. Our responsibility to pay for their housing is not relinquished now until their case is completely adjudicated. This change has caused our monthly DJJ housing bills to double in amount in comparison to previous years and is expected to cause an estimated \$70,000 – \$80,000 dollar deficit in that line item by the end of the fiscal year. It will also cause our annual budget request to increase by at least 100,000 dollars.
- DNA results have linked a suspect to a church burglary that occurred last year. The suspect is currently in the Florence County Detention waiting to be tried for separate charges of burglarizing other businesses last year.

Fire Notes

- On February 26th, Firefighter Gregory Steele graduated from the South Carolina Fire Academy after completing the 8 week program. During the program, Firefighter Steele became certified as a Firefighter I and II as well as being certified in Hazardous Materials Operations and as a Medical First Responder. Firefighter Steele is assigned to Station 1, Shift 3.
- The Fire Department’s Fire and Life Safety Division was awarded a \$1,730 grant from Factory Mutual Global Insurance Company. This grant is to assist the department in purchasing and distributing fire prevention educational materials. The department is continuously seeking grant opportunities to assist with its operation.

2010 Wellness and Safety Calendar

For the balance 2010, the City will present information on specific wellness and safety topics each month. Look for presentations, brochures, hand-outs and even demonstrations by health and wellness professionals. The monthly topics will be highlighted on the homepage of the City’s employee website, Insider Connection, and linked to important information.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Wellness</u>	<u>Safety</u>
March	Heart Health	Ergonomics
April	Nutrition & Exercise	Safety Investigation
May	Diabetes Awareness	Fire Prevention/Emergency Egress
June	Cancer Awareness	Lifting/Back Health
July	Cholesterol Awareness	Emergency Preparedness
August	Medications/Natural Healing	Security at Home and Work
September	Dental Hygiene Awareness	Personal Protection Equipment
October	Stress Management	Domestic Abuse
November	Holiday Health	Holiday Safety
December	Addictions-Alcohol and Drug	Electrical Safety

Health Screening Options for 2010 Includes Free Screening from McLeod Health

The City's Employee Wellness Program offers participants year-end awards such as paid general leave and prize drawings. In order to be eligible for these awards, the program participants must receive a biometric health screening. For 2010, the Wellness Program recognizes three sources for the biometric screening. An employee may choose to receive a screening (1) from the health professional of his/her choice, (2) from the FREE McLeod Industrial Health Fair scheduled for March 18, 2010 at the Civic Center, or (3) as part of the respirator physical exam that is mandatory for specific City jobs. For the purposes of the Wellness Program, the mini-exam must include screenings for cholesterol (or a complete blood lipid profile), blood sugar, blood pressure and Body Mass Index (or height and weight measurements). The City Manager has authorized up to 1 hour of paid leave for employees who choose option 1 or 2, as long as the leave is scheduled and approved by a supervisor/manager in advance.

Human Resources Department Springs into Job Fair Schedule

Along with the internet, newspapers, neighborhood meetings, church and city bulletin boards, the City of Florence uses job fairs to promote its employment opportunities. This spring City Recruitment Team members are scheduled to attend five job fairs, both in state and out.

Date	Job/Career Fair	Recruitment Team
March 10, 2010	Coastal Carolina University	Donna Winchester - HR
		Scott Williamson - Police
March 25, 2010	Florence – Darlington Technical College	Donna Winchester - HR
		Carlos Washington - Fire
		William Kelly – Waste Water
March 31, 2010	Francis Marion University	Donna Winchester - HR
		Larry Lugo - Finance
		Sam Toney - Police
April 14, 2010	Fort Bragg – US Army	Donna Winchester - HR
		Scott Williamson - Police
April 14, 2010	University of SC – Criminal Justice Association	Samuel Toney - Police
		Llewellyn Jordan - Police

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER PARKING & GREENSPACE

Plans are underway for construction of a parking and greenspace area adjacent to the new Performing Arts Center. B. P. Barber and Associates is preparing the layout and stormwater design with SGA handling the landscape elements. The project will utilize the old McLeod Hospital property and old Pay Parking lot area. It will include a landscaped pedestrian connection from the downtown and plaza area to the Performing Arts Center. Progress Energy will install new street lighting and area lighting throughout the new construction site and replace the old pedestrian lighting on the 100 and 200 blocks of West Evans Street and the 100 block of North and South Dargan Street. This improved lighting in the downtown area will be a major focus of the project and will include new underground electrical services to the rear of the businesses along the 100 block of West Evans Street.

The block of Cheves Street between Irby and Dargan will be included as part of the project area and will be altered to allow for angled on-street parking. New street and pedestrian lighting and landscaping will be provided in this area as well. It is anticipated that the City will need to acquire this block of Cheves Street, and possibly others, from the SCDOT in order to make the necessary improvements. These new improvements will supply approximately 250 well lit parking spaces for the Performing Arts Center and planned Florence Museum, while maintaining open spaces necessary for the Florence After Five program and other downtown events.

IOLA JONES WALKING TRAIL

At the request of local residents, the City of Florence undertook the installation of a walking track at Iola Jones Park. The 8 foot wide, quarter mile track asphalt track was installed by Palmetto Paving Corporation following site preparation by City crews. Florence County Council infrastructure funds in the amount of \$21,000 were used to pay for the asphalt work. A public dedication ceremony will be held on Friday, March 12th.

ANIMAL SHELTER CONSTRUCTION

The official groundbreaking for construction of the new Florence Humane Society Animal Shelter was held on December 17, 2009. Site preparation by City forces is underway with the completed water tap and preparation to connect 500' of sewer line to an existing line on Airport property. The application to Florence County for the required Stormwater Permit has been approved by the County and forwarded to DHEC in Columbia for their required approval. City crews will perform the preliminary grading of the site and construction of the stormwater system, pond, and outfall.

This state of the art facility was designed by architect Chris Clark and the general contractor for construction is Hanco of South Carolina, Inc. The construction period for this approximately \$1,000,000 facility is estimated to be about 1 year. Funding for the project is provided by a variety of sources including the City of Florence, the Doctor's Bruce & Lee Foundation, and private funds and donations raised by the Florence Area Humane Society.

LUCAS STREET INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

Utilizing a SCDOT Enhancement Grant, the intersection of Lucas Street and N. Irby Street will soon experience significant visual improvements. The project is currently in the design phase by the selected design firm, SGA Architecture. While facing design obstacles due to the lack of available public right-of-way, it is anticipated that SGA will be able to produce a viable design. The project will utilize \$155,000 of grant funds and \$39,000 of matching City funds, primarily through in-kind labor, and cash as necessary.

Project Updates for Council

Wastewater Management Facility – Contract 1

Total contract amount: \$ 16,550,000

Scheduled completion date: October, 2011

Project status: The project is under construction and is approximately 5% complete. Contractor continues to submit equipment shop drawings and vendor prints. Significant quantities of materials such as reinforcing steel, pipe and electrical conduit and boxes are continuing to be received at the site. Soils have been excavated for several structures and the first reinforced concrete base slab has been poured.

Materials removed during excavations are being segregated and stockpiled for reuse on the site, if not severely degraded by the City's old landfill operation. Materials consisting primarily of municipal garbage or soils impacted by burned garbage are being removed from the site. These materials are being trucked to the landfill in Lee County for final disposal. One relatively small area with excessive levels of lead has been identified. These soils will be trucked to a hazardous landfill in Alabama for final disposal.

Wastewater Management Facility – Contract 2

Estimated contract amount: \$ 62,000,000

Estimated completion date: June, 2013

Project status: Construction bids were received on February 25, 2010. The low bidder was Encore Construction Company of Winter Garden, Florida with a total bid of approximately \$73,720,000. Since this bid exceeds the current available funding, the consulting engineer, city staff and the low bidder are working to delete appropriate project elements so that a contract of approximately \$61,000,000 can be awarded.

It is anticipated that a contract of this amount will be awarded to Encore, with actual construction work to begin about July, 2010. On March 8, 2010, Council gave second (final) reading approval to a ten-year rate water and sewer rate schedule which will provide the funding necessary to support a revenue bond issue for financing the construction.