



City of Columbia Memorandum

To: Steven A. Gantt
City Manager

From: Wm. Bradley Anderson *WBA*
Special Projects Administrator

Subject: **Bar Closing Ordinances' Impact on Police Costs**

Date: 25 February 2011

The following are responses from seven jurisdictions to the question about the impact on other cities' police department budgets as a result of ordinances that require bars to close or to stop serving alcohol in the early morning hours. Of the responses received, with one exception in which there was no change in costs, the jurisdictions report that the ordinances have helped to reduce costs either through requiring less staff after the bars close or through a reduction in calls for service that has freed officers for other needs.

- **Charleston:** Overtime costs have declined for operations in the entertainment areas as a result of the closing processes becoming more consistent. A significant police presence is needed at closing time for crowd control and to ensure an orderly exit from the areas, but by 2:30 a.m. everything is clear. The bars are now accustomed to the closing procedure and they assist in moving patrons out of their businesses and along the sidewalks.
- **Goose Creek:** The City recently revised its ordinance from prohibiting sales of alcohol after 2:00 a.m., but not requiring bars to close, to mandating that they actually close. Some businesses were not complying with the earlier ordinance and were causing the need for additional police presence. It is expected that fewer incidents will occur with the new ordinance, which suggests that costs for responses and investigations should be reduced.
- **Greenville:** Costs have decreased with the implementation of the ordinance. A special team of officers works in the entertainment district from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m., after which the department is able to reduce staffing in the area.
- **Mount Pleasant:** The police department's costs have not been affected by the ordinance. Operationally, it appears that alcohol-related incidents that would have occurred after the mandatory closing have shifted to earlier in the morning while bars are still open.
- **Myrtle Beach:** The ordinance has worked well including the allowance for extended serving times for those bars that meet the criteria. Three troublesome locations that were requiring a disproportionate amount of police resources were closed with the help of the ordinance, freeing police for other needs.

- **North Charleston:** No personnel were added to enforce the ordinance that was implemented in January 2008. The police department's workload for incidents at alcohol-related business has been cut in half with associated cost savings. These incidents were down 23 percent in 2008, from 311 in 2007 to 239 in 2008, and decreased another 31 percent in 2009 to 165 incidents.
- **Rock Hill:** The ordinance has been effective in reducing calls for service and violent crime after 2:00 a.m. When it was first adopted, there was a 57 percent decrease in calls for service between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. This included a reduction in violent crime and disturbances associated with intoxicated persons. There was also a significant savings in overtime that had been used to handle the calls. Implementing the ordinance has enabled more officers to be available for patrol and to handle other incidents.