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Powder Springs Looks to Drop Inmate Work

Savings could climb as high as \$119,000 when all factors are taken into account, Public Works Director Greg Ramsey said.

By [Michael Stone](#) | [Email the author](#) | November 17, 2011

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Powder Springs stands to save \$75,000 annually in contract alone by dropping Paulding County inmates for landscaping and janitorial work and awarding the contracts to private firms, [Public Works](#) Director Greg Ramsey said.

That figure could climb as high as \$119,000 when lost time and other factors are figured in, he told the City Council at Wednesday's work session.

Ramsey said some of the savings will come from the city no longer supplying, repairing and replacing equipment for the inmates, including two vans, two trailers, telephones, an "enormous amount" of safety equipment, vehicle insurance, and insurance for the crews themselves.

The director said a chainsaw broke Wednesday, a garage door broke last week, and a steering column broke two weeks ago—all things the city had to pay for.

"How'd you lose a garage door?" Councilwoman Rosalyn Neal asked.

Amid the laughter that erupted in the room, Mayor Pat Vaughn said: "We'll talk about it later."

But if the city was to have the work done by private contractors, they'd be responsible for their own equipment, Ramsey explained.

"(Paulding County officials) execute their contract as best they can," he said. "There's just a lot of errors involved—a lot of things happen. Accidents happen everyday. Our folks have accidents, but the problem is when they have accidents, we're paying for it."

Ramsey said there are no plans yet on what to do with the equipment that's usable, but it could be auctioned or continue to be utilized by the city.

Another cost-saver he noted was in time spent working.

The crews are contracted to work four 10-hour workdays, Ramsey said, but that includes time at the jail before work, transportation, and time at the jail after work.

"As far as time they're actually in the city working, it's at most six hours a day—six times four is 24 hours" a week, the director said.

Councilman Al Thurman noted that the "quality" of the inmate work "is just simply not there."

Councilman Tom Bevirt said a prisoner was suspected of a theft about three years ago.

Powder Springs can get out of the contract with Paulding with a seven-day notice, Ramsey said.

Also on Wednesday:

- Police Chief Charlie Sewell explained how selling the police department's two motorcycles fully equipped [to another police agency](#) might be more beneficial for the city than selling them on GovDeals.com.
- Council members were presented with future use floodplain maps. The [Dewberry](#) firm's Sam Crampton said that if residents affected by the new maps get flood insurance early, they can be grandfathered in and purchase it for about \$500 a year. But if they wait until it's "mandated on them," he added, they could be looking at \$1,000 to \$2,000 annually. Crampton said some residents could even be coming out of the floodplain. Either way, those affected will be alerted by mail, he said. There aren't many changes, so Crampton said he expects the maps to be "well accepted."
- The council discussed how it will need to pay Norfolk Southern \$100 a year, including a payment for last year, to use 3,375 square feet near the Seven Springs Museum. Vaughn called the price "pretty reasonable."
- The council again [weighed the issue](#) of allowing citizens to vote on package alcohol sales on Sundays.
- The council discussed voting on the first reading of an ordinance Monday that would amend the city's budget and give raises to its employees, who haven't had an increase in pay in more than four years. City Manager Rick Eckert wasn't sure of the figures yet, but said he would have them ready by Monday's meeting.
- The council went into executive session to discuss a personnel issue.

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Tea Man

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12:38 pm on Thursday, November 17, 2011

RE: "Powder Springs stands to save \$75,000 annually in contract alone by dropping Paulding County inmates for landscaping and janitorial work"

Great, as long as the city's ready to do this work, with current workforce, otherwise the savings will be ephemeral.

Reply

James

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12:45 pm on Friday, November 18, 2011

Where does all this information come from about the great savings that can be reaped by getting rid of the inmate work details? Who is going to do the work? Will a private contractor do all the special things they (inmate workers) do? If the inmate workers are destroying all this equipment, are they also the ones that are driving the trash trucks into each other, or did they drive the trash truck through the maintenance hangar door? Why do you blame everything on the inmate workers, when you have city employees that are just as bad, if not worse. Why do you have a city employee (the second in charge) running public works, that has been asked to leave another job for unwanted sexual advances? He has even done the same thing while working for the City of Powder Springs.

Reply



Michael Stone

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12:49 pm on Friday, November 18, 2011

Hi James, I'm not sure about all the other things, but I think to come up with the cost savings, the city looked at when it had private contractors in the past and compared the costs.

john heggler

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3:40 pm on Tuesday, November 22, 2011

James,
Can you prove this in a court of law?
Can you afford a lawyer to defend yourself on a slander suit?

Sunshine

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1:29 am on Sunday, November 20, 2011

I Find it funny that The city of Powder springs is in the Midst of a financial Crisis, so they are going to outsource the city's Sanitation Service, yet above it states that they are gonna vote on giving out raises that haven't been Given in 4 years...What about the 9 City employees who will no longer have jobs and their families?? What about a man in the sanitation department who has been with the city for 30 YEARS and they are just kicking them to the curb like they are trash. (No Pun intended)
They are Going to Outsource the City's Sanitation to a Private company which would make it "cheaper" for the city, but then who is going to make sure that all of the trash is picked up? Is that Private company going to come back to pick up ONE customers trash that was left beind, like the current sanitation crew does? What about Reside with pride week twice a year? Is that Private company going to pickup EVERYTHING that the residents set out those weeks, at no Additional Charge, Like the sanitation crew does now? I don't think so...I personally think it's a CROCK! Your "Mayor" is a Joke, she was paid an additional \$3,000 a month to step in as city Manager 5 years ago, because it "was causing personal loss" guess what, YOUR THE MAYOR AND THAT IS YOUR JOB! to Manage YOUR city, to do whatever it takes to keep YOUR city up and running! oh her big to do at 4th of July with her \$24,000 firework shows? That the Citys SANITATION crew busts it but to run the event. What a joke...RESIGN MAYOR!

[Reply](#)

Sunshine

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1:37 am on Sunday, November 20, 2011

Oh not to mention that it sucks for the men who will loose their jobs, but she is cuting the dept out, without even allowing the residents to vote on it, because I can guarantee that, the residents would not approve. a "private" company is not going to care about them, and what about the residents who will no longer be ale to afford trash service due to the new companys bill? what about the residents who will no longer be able to "reside with pride" because the new company wants to charge an arm and leg for removal of larger items? or the Elderly residents who can barley walk, much less manage to get their trash can to the curb, and the Sanitation crew gets it and puts it back for them...These men bust their butts to take care of a city that none of them actually live in, and the city has no interest in taking care of them... Seems to me like Mayor Pat Vaughn doesn't care if the residents reside with pride, or get their trash picked up as long as she gets their money, they can fend for themselves...SHAME ON YOU MAYOR! I personally cannot wait until the day she is out of the office!

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City Dweller

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2:28 pm on Wednesday, November 23, 2011

•Police Chief Charlie Sewell explained how selling the police department's two motorcycles fully equipped to another police agency might be more beneficial for the city than selling them on GovDeals.com.

Are you freaking kidding me? I hope he gets it in writing.

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