

From the Mayor's Desk:

Happy Friday! I will be taking next week off from these notes, so expect to see the next chapter in 2 weeks time.

First off, I'd like to welcome Barron Munoz to the Village of Surfside Beach City Hall, as he accepted the position of Tourism Specialist this week. He will be reporting directly to Amanda Davenport who will be responsible for Tourism. A full Village of Surfside Beach organizational chart will be published with my next update note!

Next up, hats off to a bunch of residents who have jumped into action to help by sharing their expertise with the Village of Surfside Beach over the last week. Not to discount the many who had raised their hands in support prior to this week, but I did want to call out a few folks who spent time recently in City Hall and at the Water/Sewage control areas. Some good ideas and improvement opportunities came from contact & visits by Blake C, Cailyn A, and Larry & Lisa P. It takes a village!!

Freeport water 90 day written notice:

We received the notice from Freeport this week. This is verbatim: "Surfside has ninety (90) days to timely provide Freeport with an acceptable payment plan to fully pay for all outstanding bills due to Freeport. If an acceptable payment plan is not received and approved by Freeport City Council prior to the expiration of ninety (90) days from the date of this letter, Freeport will cease to provide drinking water to Surfside on Friday, February 14, 2025 ("Effective Date of Cessation"). On or after the Effective Date of Cessation, if full payment for all outstanding obligations due Freeport is not made by Surfside; or, in the alternative, if an acceptable payment plan is not approved by Freeport City Council, Freeport reserves the right to pursue any legal proceedings that may be deemed necessary or appropriate to enforce Surfside's obligations under the Agreement." Again, I applaud Freeport's city management and council for how they have worked with us as we navigate through the after effects of Beryl and it's impact on our finances. Nothing really changes from the information that I shared in last week's note. We intend to pay Freeport and do not intend to halt water supply from Freeport. We are calculating the proper water bill rate increase needed for our water supply and will need to vote that through our city council. Again, all that information will be shared with the public.

Beach & Parks Department:

Lots of activity in this space as the off season has allowed work to commence on improvements and repairs. Again, the vast majority of this work is funded by Beach and Hotel Funds, not the Funds involved in water, sewer, etc.

- Stahlman Park - Dune reconstruction is in process with all other Beryl damage repairs completed. The dune walkover has permits submitted with plans to use a fibercrete sidewalk and ADA compliant design. Estimates would forecast completion of Stahlman walkover in early January. The funds are available from the Hotel Fund for this project.

- Crabbing Pier – The pilings out to the long pier are rotten which is why it had been closed off. This project is a bit complicated as it may require a specific contractor to work in that natural bay/wetlands and avoid disturbance of that habitat. We have some initial bids to remove the pier extension and build a larger platform pier. This new design was approved by council. Once a bid is accepted, the construction will begin. The funds are available from the Hotel Fund for this project
- Beach access roads – We have 4 access roads planned to be repaired with new asphalt. The work will remove and resurface the entrance/exit onto Bluewater. The 4 road entrances include Coral Ct which has been a subject of discussion at several council meetings. The funds are available from the Beach Fund for this project. Assuming this resurfacing holds up with time, the plan would be to continue next year on 4-5 more in need of repair. The other general road repairs will be funded by Beryl disaster relief which are tied to FEMA, and as a result will be delayed into 2025 when we expect to receive those relief funds.
- Golf cart path – Edging of the path is in process to open more cart path surface by removing overgrowth. This is in response to some head on ‘close calls’ with passing carts on the path. Some repairs with concrete have also started this week on the path to address uneven transitions over roads.

Public Works Department:

We received a TCEQ violation letter this month, dated October 25, 2024. Erick spoke with TCEQ and they indicated that it was as a result of greater than 10 notices from the period 01/01/2023 to 12/12/24, or essentially a 2 year rolling period, we triggered a threshold that required citation by TCEQ. We have been instructed to wait for the formal enforcement actions from TCEQ. If you have any questions, please contact Erick in Public Works.

In response to questions on water meters, we currently have 1341 meters village wide. Of those, 170 are buried and cannot be read properly and 24 are broken or missing meters. Public works department’s plan to address those 194 meters requiring service/repairs will be to employ some temporary workers to focus 100% on that work. Please understand that we will first need to receive Beryl disaster assistance grants or loans to address current System Funds financial shortfalls. An estimated time frame to begin this service/repair on the meters is realistically January or February. Stay tuned.

We now have two of two vacuum pumps are up and running on the sewage system That has resulted in two of the three sewage lines to be back in full operation now. The third line, the Fort line is being repaired now to bring us back to full operations as we enter December. A brief note on the sewer system for education. When one of the ~300 sewer pits fails it does so in an open position that draws continuous full vacuum, which puts a heavy strain on the 2 vacuum pumps. This occurs frequently, and is the root cause of our premature pump failures that will take 1-2 of our 3 sewer lines down for days and weeks. The sewer system design has flaws that public works fights daily. In January we will be hosting a town hall meeting to discuss both water and sewer systems. I want

this to be an educational town hall to help everyone understand what we have, why we experience issues, and collectively and constructively discuss solutions for short and long term.

Lastly in public works, the continuous flushing of water lines has halted and Freeport water usage is being limited as much as possible. If you experience changes to your water supply, please contact public works for spot flushing.

Disaster Relief / FEMA Update:

FEMA has reduced our Category 1 (Debris) total down to ~\$400,000. Again, this is important as FEMA category 1 is what we can immediately borrow through the Governor's emergency funds. Our total FEMA submission from Beryl is now over \$4.5 million. This may be reduced as we enter detailed discussions with FEMA and work through our full submission during their site visit. Good news, we have been moved up to the top of the list with FEMA and will be hosting a site visit in Surfside on December 10th-11th.

Other items of Interest:

We have some openings on a few committees and will be looking to add members. If you are interested in the Tourism Committee or the Beach Committee, please contact City Hall to request an application. Meeting dates and times for both committees are posted on the Village of Surfside Beach website. Feel free to attend and see if it's something that you would like to be involved in!

As we file for FEMA assistance, it is very helpful to have pictures of the aftermath from both Alberto & Beryl. If you have pictures or video of either storm, please reach out to Janet at City Hall. She is the point person for the FEMA submission and would love to have more photographic evidence of damage to help our discussion with FEMA.

I'm pleased to pass along that a group of residents has started and Angel Tree located at Circle K. Anyone who lives on the island and would like some assistance to help make Christmas a little bit brighter for their child or children, please visit Circle K and complete a wish list. Anyone who wants to help make a child's Christmas brighter can visit Circle K and take a child's wish list from the tree.

Last but certainly not least. There will be a Surfside Christmas Tree Lighting extravaganza on November 30th (Saturday after Thanksgiving). Starting at Noon, Sharkies will host kid friendly ornament making that can be taken home or hung on our village Christmas tree later that evening. Starting at 2pm the annual Santa Con festivities kick off for the adult crowd at the Jetty Shack. The evening celebration starts at 5pm with a tree decorating located on the corner of the front entrance. Look for the full size tree and a 4 foot kid's tree. Santa will be in attendance for the kids and kids at heart!! The tree lighting ceremony and Christmas carols lead by Catie Pearl will be at 6pm. A huge thanks to Kenny & Joyce and all their helpers for making this happen!!

Happy Thanksgiving to all next week. Take care of yourself and each other.

Hope to see you around the island this weekend!

Zach