

From the Mayor's desk – 3/28/25

Happy Friday!

A foggy sunrise this week here in Surfside, but those temps are steadily rising, and let's admit that the sunsets have been pretty spectacular.

Police Department:

To reiterate from last week, our new Police Chief, Philip Hester asked me to provide his personal cell number to the community in this letter. If you have concerns or questions about PD, want to alert him to a “non-emergency” issue, or just want to introduce yourself, Philip's cell phone number is (979) 482-2324. He is also in process of setting up a couple casual meet & greet townhall type meetings with the community.

A very good weekend of Beach Patrol based on reports and conversations that I had around town, along with reports from Toby and Chief Hester. We're fine tuning well in advance of the summer rush. More ticket readers have been authorized to allow all the reserves to operate with full patrol capability. As always, please provide your feedback on how to make this better.

Chief Hester invited the D.E.A. to Surfside Beach this week on Thursday to assist in properly identify, securing, and disposing of a dangerous amount of fentanyl from our evidence room. Thanks to the D.E.A. for assisting us and making sure our evidence room is safe to be used again. It is now up and running again, and a full inventory has begun.

Human Resources:

Reminder that we have several positions open for hiring at City Hall:

EMS Director. This posting is coming down very soon. If interested, please contact City Hall.

Finance Director. One week remaining on this active job posting. If interested, please contact City Hall.

Seasonal Beach positions ongoing. If interested, please contact City Hall.

Beach & Parks:

A great kick off to the season through spring break. Just in the month of March we have collected over \$100,000 in beach pass revenue. Again, this revenue pays for the operation of the seasonal beach crews, all labor, portable toilets, trash collection, beach cleanup, signage, maintenance to beach access roads and walkovers, and PD/EMS beach patrol labor + equipment. All regulated and agreed through the GLO and our Beach & Dune Plan.

Every summer we have a collection of Surfside Beach residents volunteer to hand out trash bags on the beach to our visitors. We are gearing up for that effort again this year and are looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping for a day, a weekend, or the entire summer, then please contact Toby or City Hall directly. We will have a local focal point announced (spoiler alert, probably Asad!) who will organize the efforts for this year's beach season. In addition, our PD patrol will be providing trash bags to anyone who receives a warning for littering.

More trash cans and portable toilets will be getting placed in the coming weeks in preparation for the full summer beach season upcoming.

Beach & Parks crew continue with road repairs. The street asphalt hole repairs process involves cutting straight edges, cleaning out the hole, applying patch materials, and packing. It takes longer to apply, but should result in less return trips to repair a hole two and three times. Thanks to those who have communicated with us on priority street locations needing repairs. It helps!

Public Works:

The Utilities group led by Breana our Utilities Clerk has researched improvements to our Utilities billing system and ultimately selected Muni-Link. This will be an improvement for customers, with much better online services including payment processing. It also simplifies meter reading with GPS capability and in the field digital meter captures, with photos. Another feature is the ability to send text alerts to certain customers, or all of Surfside when we have planned water outages, boil notice, or even large scale emergency notifications like hurricane evacuation details. This will improve communications. The annual cost is a reduction from our RVS system used today that was implemented decades ago. Changeover and implementation won't be immediate, actually it will take 3-4 months behind the scenes, however we will continue to communicate with everyone as this new Water/Sewer/Garbage billing system is implemented.

Some maintenance is underway on the Swordfish generator. The base skid plate requires a complete repair along with other maintenance parts required for proper operations of the

generator have been contracted. We will be spending just over \$17,500 on parts and labor to improve operations of the generator for our future needs.

Other Items of Interest:

Not much of an update here, but I know people are asking about the groins project. It is currently held up by the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) working on biological opinions of endangered species. They are working with other agencies to assess the impact the project may have on endangered species, of which two are currently being evaluated, the Green Sea Turtle and the Giant Manta Ray (this one is new!). The February update by USACE was, the biological assessment was completed, and the biological opinion was projected to be completed in April. If USACE meets those completion dates, then GLO projects the reauthorization date for permit completion would be by May 31st. Coast & Harbor in conjunction with GLO offered to review the permit for the Village of Surfside Beach prior to us signing off. Once the permit is completed, then Coast & Harbor can begin. Engineering is completed, and they would bid the project and move forward with construction. The rough estimate to start remains August 2025.

The Mayor's Water Task Force hosted Communities Unlimited in Surfside this week to tour and assess our entire water and sewer systems. Lots of information in the half day that they were here, and next steps are some formal recommendations for improvement and permanent fixes, including funding ideas. In addition, the Task Force met with the USDA and the American Water Works Assoc (AWWA) to discuss our issues and possible solutions. The Task Force will be reporting out monthly at City Council meetings going forward.

Lastly, Surfside Beach will be hosting the Texas Gulf Surfing Association this weekend near Beach Drive. Hope that the weather cooperates and the surf represents our Village's namesake! Just as a point of information, they will be positioning their trailer on the pedestrian beach with approval from with us and GLO.

Have a great day and I hope to see you around the island this weekend!

Thanks,

Zach