

From the Mayor's desk – 4/17/26

Happy Friday!

My not so brief update, followed by a much better one from William Cox.

●Let's start with The Facts article about our Hotel Fund. Here are the actual facts... Council approved a Hotel Fund budget this week that has a current year deficit of \$949k. To be exact it is a deficit of \$949,207.95. Why approve such a large deficit you may ask. Well, this was intentional and let me explain why it makes sense. We currently have \$1,828,394.22 in Hotel Fund TexPool reserves, and in addition we have \$2,463,351 in HB1915 TexPool reserves that are set aside for things like hurricane recovery efforts. So, as you can see we are in very good financial health in the total Hotel Fund. This healthy financial reserve position allowed Council to approve several one-time large dollar expenses that were both strategic and long standing, necessary repairs that couldn't be funded for years. These include a strategic land purchase next to City Hall for \$230k, the Water Tower painting/advertisement for \$140k, major City Hall/Museum structural repairs for \$100k, and our Crabbing Pier rebuild for \$50k. In addition, we utilized the new allowance for PD & EMS expenses as a result of moving to 5% Hotel Tax, from 4% previously. Combined, PD & EMS added \$380k of expenses to the Hotel Fund and removed that burden from the General Fund (property tax fund, fyi). So, in the end, we will finally get the Water Tower repaired and painted, City Hall structural repairs completed, rebuild the Crabbing Pier, secure 4 lots next to City Hall for the future, and also provide relief to the General Fund. A very good use of the healthy reserves to invest in Surfside Beach. The projected end of year Hotel Fund reserves will still be a healthy \$879,186.27 with the HB1915 reserves for hurricane relief at \$2.7 Million. In addition the General Fund today sits at a very healthy total balance, including reserves of \$755k. I personally commend Council for utilizing all of our income streams to benefit the Village and lighten the burden on General Fund property tax needs. This is proper financial management in action that results in successful completion of large dollar improvements that could 'never' get funded in the past, and ultimately puts us in a position to NOT rely solely on property tax revenue. Solid Actions and Solid Future Vision.

●The income survey was completed and our submission was accepted this week for the CDBG grant for \$123,500 to fund an upgraded water line replacement project on Seashell Drive. Over \$123k of free money to improve water distribution. Big picture, we are evaluating a larger income survey for the entire Village that could be completed in advance of any/all future submissions for large grants that could impact the entire Village. There is much more grant money available for low/medium income communities which we may be able to benefit from. Stay tuned for more on this one as we will need everyone's help!

●Groins & Beach Nourishment update. We had a good project update meeting this week. The GLO has provided feedback to Coast & Harbor Engineering, which in turn will be completing the Final Project Manual. The GLO then takes that body of work to

start the Procurement process, producing a request for proposal (RFP), that is used for contractor bidding and selection. The GLO projection for procurement, contractor selection, and construction start is 6 months time. This is still in line with previous project timelines for construction starting in October. In related activity, we started our work to move the main beach entrance, which will allow for clear and easy one way access by vehicles onto the beach, while allowing heavy construction vehicles access through the 'old' main entrance. After construction of the East groin, we will maintain this new entrance and replace the dune to block off the old entrance. A project is also underway to properly build up the road surface of the new main entrance to the beach.

●Council approved Freeport's counter offer for repayment of water charges. They countered with a half payment immediately, which is about \$325k, and \$100k annually with interest until the balance is paid in full. They also have the ability to repay the balance early without penalty.

In closing, before it becomes a Facebook conversation, the seaweed washing up will be handled exactly as it was last year. We want to let it naturally and organically nourish the beach & dunes. That means we plan to leave it as it is. If and when it coincides with busy tourism weekends, like Memorial Day, we will take action to relocate it closer to the dune line. That compromise worked well last year, even though both sides of the seaweed argument were unhappy! Oh well.

Have a great weekend everyone. I hope to see you out there running around the island!

Zach

From the City Administrator's Desk:

Greetings, Surfside Beach! It has been an exciting week of progress across the Village. With my first official Council meeting under my belt, we are moving full speed ahead into Spring. If you have driven through town recently, you have likely noticed our crews improving our public spaces, from road repairs to shifting our main beach entrance. Here is an abbreviated look at what our departments have been working on this week...

City Hall Repairs: A pre-construction meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22nd, with our contractor and the engineers of record to finalize the scope and details for the City Hall repair project.

Roadways: Public Works has been continuing the momentum and filling potholes this week. Additionally, fresh handicap parking spots were painted at the Main Beach Entrance, the Crabbing Pier, and City Hall.

Entrance Relocation: Work has begun on the east side of the Surfside sign to relocate the

main entrance, with completion expected by the end of next week. For this weekend (Friday through Sunday), the existing entrance will remain open for traffic.

Elevated Water Tank Art: We received our first sneak peek of the new artwork for the elevated water tank! We will be sharing the final rendering with the community very soon.

Sunset Stage Event: Final preparations are coming together for the next Sunset Stage event! We are thrilled to feature The Traveling Murphys, James Harvey and Friends, and the Snakeoil Salesmen. Mark your calendar!

Tourism Committee Recruitment: We are actively reviving the Tourism Committee and recruiting residents. If you are passionate about the future of Surfside and want to get involved, we are handing out applications now.

Short-Term Rental Management: Staff is finalizing the implementation of Deckard/Rentalscape. This new software integration will help us better manage short-term rentals and ensure a smoother process for both the Village and property owners.

Police Department Update: We are proud to announce that the Surfside Beach Police Department is fully staffed! We recently welcomed Officer Scott Green, who brings over 20 years of law enforcement experience. He will be managing the evidence room as well as patrolling our streets. The department is also deep into preparations for Jeep Weekend in May. Amazingly, the department just hit a 10-month milestone with zero sick calls!

Public Works: Our Utilities team continues their daily operations without interruption. The water crew is focusing on their monthly flushing list and handling service calls, while the sewer crew is conducting their daily pit rounds and rebuilds. All meter readings are on schedule.

City Secretary & Court: The administration is staying busy processing the closing for the recent property purchase and keeping up with upcoming election requirements. Additionally, the Municipal Court handled 121 cases this month.

Smooth sailing and see you in the surf!

William