

## **From the Mayor's desk – 6/27/25**

Happy Friday!

My eyes are buggy today from looking at Surfside financial budget numbers all week long. More to come on that...

### Police & EMS Departments:

A somber follow up to last week's note. The 2nd distressed swimmer from the call on county beach entrance 4 was recovered this week in Galveston. The Chief and myself had been working with The Facts on producing an educational article to help prepare folks for beach safety. In addition, several citizens have passed along pictures and descriptions of what other beaches around the world are doing to help curb this awful surf drowning tragedy. We will be moving forward with more educational signage on the dangers of rip currents this and next season in attempts to prepare our beach visitors so they can enjoy a safe experience in Surfside Beach. At next week's Beach Advisory Committee meeting, they will be discussing a formal proposal on signage to educate swimmers on the dangers.

On another note, the preliminary General Fund planning for both PD & EMS was completed this week by Frank (EMS), Philip (PD), and Christie (Finance). This activity consists of the Department Director and Finance Director creating their budget needs by each line item for the department. Items such as staffing expectations, expenses, improvement projects, etc. This is in preparation for the public Council Budget workshops that have started this week. Systems Fund budget was reviewed with Council this week, and both PD & EMS will review with Council next week on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The holiday weekend is coming up for 4th of July next week and we will be hosting another Emergency Response Command Center at Stahlman Park. In the past we have had many donations of food, water, ice, and supplies to help support our PD & EMS, along with the reserves and visiting agencies who will be out patrolling our beach and Village. If anyone would like to donate items for this Command Center, please contact City Hall next week. Janet will be coordinating this effort. Thanks in advance folks!!

### Beach & Parks:

Road repairs continue. The final concrete pour was this week on Sand Dune, Coral, and Bay. Those road entrances off of Bluewater should be cured and ready for full traffic flow later next week. Our next large road project will be Surf & Thunder. It is out for bid with an expectation to be started in July. In addition, three more pallets of asphalt patch have been ordered for minor pothole repairs as well.

Dang, there sure are a lot of sticks, logs, and debris that has washed up after the rain. Our plan is to let it stay over the weekend as it is, for the most part. We have a skid steer rented for 1 week starting today that will use to begin to remove the larger trees/logs. Those will be pushed up towards dunes and our beach crew will follow behind with a trailer and chainsaw to dispose of them. On Monday we will evaluate the situation after the weekend beach traffic, and have preliminary plans to remove the trashy debris. Some of the “artwork” that has been built may stay as we have lots of positive comments from visitors. Toby and I welcome your thoughts on topic as well. This cleanup plan will be cast and set into motion at our 9am weekly beach meeting at City Hall on Monday morning.

Preliminary Beach Fund budget activity by Beach & Parks Dept and Finance was also completed this week. This preliminary Beach Fund budget will then add any project suggestions from the Beach Advisory Committee meeting next week, and then that budget will be reviewed publicly by Council, possibly on Wednesday, if we can complete PD & EMS on Tuesday.

#### HR:

Lots of action supporting the budgeting process. Each department is forecasting their staffing levels and overtime expectations. HR is then working through each employee’s annual pay forecast plus OT, benefits, longevity pay, and associated workman’s comp and insurance costs that must be paid by the City. These totals are then loaded into Finance’s accounting structure for the proper Fund allocations and will be reviewed publicly with Council at the Budget Workshops. Lots of work to do this accurately and account for exactly what we will need to pay our employees of VOSB.

#### Finance:

A very busy week in Finance. Monday and Tuesday kicked off the Council Budget Workshops, with Systems Fund taking center stage. After 2 Council budget meetings, we adjourned and walked away with a balanced SF budget, but also a few homework assignments to validate a handful of expense line items. This homework will be completed and the final Systems Fund budget will be submitted to Council for approval. In addition, as I said earlier, preliminary budget work with EMS, PD, Beach, and HR took place this week. I want to personally thank Christie for jumping in and managing her first budget cycle with grace and style. The Council Budget Workshops on SF this week went very smoothly, as a result of great preparation by both Erick and Christie. Nice Job!

#### Public Works:

More budget updates here, but that was the majority of the week at City Hall! Erick presented his budget proposal to Council on Monday and Tuesday. As I’ve said, it went

very well as he did a large amount of work in advance and met with Christie to review his preliminary plans early in this process to be ready for Council's workshop. Success loves preparation! Some highlights to his budget for next year include, a PM service contract for downstream sewer infrastructure that we had previously run to failure, \$50k designated for trials of improved design AIRVAC sewer pits & controllers, 2 full time meter reader employees to ensure water meters get recorded monthly, and much of this funded by a planned reduction in the cost of Freeport water of 80%.

Muni-Link utilities billing software change is getting close to Go Live date which is July 11<sup>th</sup>. As we have been working the transition, we have uncovered incorrect billing errors (underbilling) that will be corrected going forward. The current basic water rate is \$41.50 and basic garbage rate is \$20.81. If you had been paying less than that, it was in error that was in your favor, but that will change. All the rates will be current when we switch on July 11<sup>th</sup>.

Some notes on Muni-Link about what you can expect with the change. Also, please look at the Village of Surfside Beach website along with our Facebook page for more details. Muni-Link: If you pay your water bill at City Hall today, then you will be able to still pay in person or mail just like before. If you pay online, then you should receive an email by July 17<sup>th</sup> with your new account number and CID number. Use these to access the new online customer portal. If you don't receive by July 17<sup>th</sup>, please call City Hall. Important note: your August water bill will include your new account number and CID number. Again, you will need these to log into the new customer portal.

#### Other Items of Interest:

Did you know that each property owner pays a decent amount of their property taxes to Velasco Drainage, and they maintain our ditches in Surfside? So, if you have an issue with drainage, or see the need to clean out your ditches, please contact City Hall and we can help facilitate that work to get done for you. We will assess the need, provide Velasco with the proper paperwork and approvals, and they will schedule the work.

Did you know that your old, damaged garbage cans can be turned in to City Hall for a replacement, free of charge? If you speak with Breana and bring your old blue can to City Hall, she can help you get a replacement to take home. Make sure to call her at City Hall first, as we don't always have a full supply of replacement garbage cans at City Hall.

As always, I hope that you have a great day and enjoy the weekend in wonderful Surfside Beach!

Thanks,

Zach