

From the Mayor's desk – 6/6/25

Happy Friday!

Lots going on at and around City Hall this week, so let's get caught up.

Police & EMS Departments:

First, the missing swimmer still has not been recovered. We stopped the official full time recovery efforts this week, and will continue normal patrols from this point forward. Our thought and prayers go out to the family and loved ones.

We are expecting the potential for a large crowd planning to gather on County Beach this weekend for the Kappa Beach Party. Our PD in conjunction with County Sheriff, Constable Precinct 1, and DPS will be out in force. We will execute the Op Plan that has been established for large gatherings with our PD & EMS this weekend to ensure that traffic flows and we maintain safety on the beach and in Surfside. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chief Philip Hester on his personal cell phone, (979) 482-2324.

Again, a reminder that outside agencies can and will enforce all laws on the beach, including one way traffic for golf carts. Please be advised and plan accordingly.

EMS plans to staff the beach during the summer and especially on busy weekends, and has been fortunate to use donated side by side vehicles from Brazoria County. During the City Council meeting next week, our EMS Director, Frank DeMarco will be discussing the need for dedicated beach side by side vehicles suited for EMS calls. These would be funded by HOT taxes or Beach Funds. If you have an opinion or want your voice to be heard on this topic, please contact Council Members and/or attend the meeting.

Beach & Parks:

Some clean up efforts on the beach this week. Our crews are removing the large debris at the water's edge that has washed up. If you have items that you feel need attention or removal, please call City Hall.

Reminder that the cement work at the three intersections, Coral Ct, Bay Ave, and Surf & Main entrance is scheduled to begin on June 9th (weather permitting). The contractors will be removing old materials first that will create some traffic changes, specifically to Surf Drive which will be blocked at the corner to the main entrance. Both Coral and Bay will be

open for one lane traffic for the duration of this project. One note, for those living on Coral and Bay, your trash pickup may be impacted. City Hall will be delivering written instructions to each residence on Coral & Bay detailing how we will manage the garbage collection during this time.

A few potential ordinance changes on the City Council agenda next week with ties to the beach. Mobile vending on the beach, Digging large holes on the beach, leaving tents up overnight on the beach, and parking RVs on the beach. If you have an opinion or want your voice to be heard on these topics, please contact Council Members and/or attend the meeting.

HR:

We have an open position for a Deputy Clerk of Courts. If interested, please contact City Hall.

Public Works:

We have all 3 AIRVAC sewer lines up and running all week. The PW crew is now responding to individual pit repairs and maintenance, so please contact City Hall with any issues that you may have, so they can address them ASAP.

On Thursday, we had a productive visit to neighboring Port O'Connor by our own Alderman at Large, Jon Gerber, our Public Works Director, Erick Ingram, and myself. They have similarities to Surfside in that a community of ~500 full time and 10,000 with tourism exists on water wells and AIRVAC sewers. We came away with some good ideas and potential solutions to both our water quality and AIRVAC sewer design concerns. Port O'Connor is about 6-7 years ahead of us on the path to improvement, and we can learn from their victories and defeats in order to chart our path to avoid their pitfalls and not take 6-7 years to get there. I expect that we will have an good update to share at next week's City Council meeting about what we learned. It was honestly too much to detail in this short Friday note, and I don't want to steal any thunder from Jon & Erick who can speak to this at next week's City Council meeting.

Other Items of Interest:

We received our FEMA disaster relief check for \$295,140 to close out Category A. As I highlighted last week, in addition, we have submitted and have agreement with FEMA on Category B (\$895,000), Category E (\$177,424), and Category G (\$268,232). These other 3

Categories need to then go “under obligation” with FEMA in order to move to the remittance of funds to Surfside. This has been anywhere from 1-3 months lead time from past experience, fyi.

An update on our finances: Back in October 2024 we had outstanding debts due to Beryl clean up and in turn unpaid bills (like the Freeport water bill) that exceeded \$1MM. The Freeport water bill was over \$700,000 of that total. Our agreement that was submitted to Freeport on Jan 8, 2025 was to pay any current monthly usage plus \$50,000 each month of past due balance, and if & when we received the FEMA Category A funds, we would pay 65% of our outstanding bill using those funds. I am very please to report that we have successfully paid down our Freeport water bill. As of today we owe \$51,000 which will be paid in full this month. In addition, we have paid down all of our outstanding debt, with one exception, Waste Connections. We still owe WC \$142,000 outstanding past due and have agreed to pay in full within the next 2 months. With the FEMA Category A relief funds in hand, we can officially pay off both of these outstanding debts and be 100% whole going into storm season. Actually, we will have a positive balance of over \$600,000 in our General Fund (GF) and our Systems Fund (SF). In addition, high praise to the Public Works Department to successfully operate water distribution without using any Freeport water since late January. We have come a long way in the last 6 months, and I want to thank the City Staff and Council for helping us get to this point.

Going forward with our new Finance Director, it is my commitment to have all 4 of our funds balanced and posted on our website monthly, including actual expenses and income updates. Please be patient as this won't be instantaneous, but I commit to making this happen over the next 12 months of my term. If we hit Labor Day and this isn't done, then start getting on me about my personal say:do ratio...please hold me accountable.

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

Thanks,

Zach