

From the Mayor's desk – 7/11/25

Happy Friday everyone!

Police & EMS Departments:

Another really great collection of effort and results from our team of First Responders last weekend over the 4th of July celebrations at the beach. Crowd control and traffic control was exceptional in my opinion. The only Bluewater Hwy back up that I witnessed was the Sunday morning checkout crowd that were leaving the island. All in all, a summer so far where solid preparations have led to success at each and every test. My sincere appreciation goes out to all of our PD/EMS and reserves that make this happen with all their hard work. Thanks!

Our Command Center last weekend at Stahlman was also a big success. A lot of donations and volunteers contributed to make it top notch. In no particular order, I'd like to personally thank the following folks: Sun & Sea Golf Carts, John Colt family, Steve Porter, Chick-fil-A, Marsha Hines, and Jennie Green-Prats. Donations included houses to stay at, lunches, golf carts, sweet treats, and lots of snacks & hydration. Thanks so much to ALL the people who gave so much to support the team of First Responders this past weekend.

Lastly, the PD confiscated a decent amount of fireworks that have been set aside as evidence and will be destroyed after all cases are settled. One suggestion was to continue to collect fireworks all summer and plan a coordinated "destruction" of everything at the end of summer, at a sanctioned location, possibly on the jetty. I'd love to hear from you on your opinions of an annual fireworks show to celebrate the end of summer, which also could double as a way to destroy all the fireworks. Something like, the Tuesday after Labor Day festival on the pedestrian beach near the jetty. Lots to be done to get this approved and coordinated, but first, I wanted to gather some opinions from the community.

Beach & Parks:

Lots of work to set up next year's Beach Fund budget was completed this week, including the budget review with City Council on Tuesday. Some highlights of next years funded items include, a new beach rake, a purchased skid steer to avoid rental costs, more funding for walkover repairs including engineered cement stairs on Beach Drive, and more cement road repairs planned for our beach road access points.

The next large road project will be Surf & Thunder that is still scheduled to start this month. The intersection will be required to be blocked off for about a week without vehicle traffic, so this will take some planning with homeowners on Thunder.

Some of the next larger road projects will include the intersection at Ft Velasco & Thunder, on the north side of Ft Velasco, and sections of Canal Drive that took a major hit. These are more closely tied in timing with the receipt of FEMA Category B (Roads) disaster relief funds. These road repairs will be funded out of General Funds, and in turn paid for with FEMA relief money. The update from FEMA and the State is looking like August delivery of relief funds, but they have promised dates and missed them in the past! Fingers crossed that we can get moving on these road projects soon.

Finance:

A bit of a carbon copy of last few weeks update here. Very busy week in Finance. We completed the Beach Fund budget review with City Council this week. Also, worked on the preliminary Hotel Fund budget with Tourism Committee (Oscar & Marsha), Amanda, and Barron. The next steps on budget work will be to finalize all the 2026 labor costs for employees working for VOSB, including all benefits and insurance paid by VOSB. Once completed, we can return to the General Fund with City Council and finalize the fund balancing exercise with that budget. In addition, the Hotel Fund still needs to be reviewed with City Council. Both will be scheduled for July 23rd. Again, great progress and professionalism by Finance Dept.

Public Works:

The Muni-Link utilities billing software change is live and being tested now. Currently, we cannot accept any payments except in the form of cash or check at City Hall.

Again, as we have been working the transition to Muni-Link 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 11th.

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 17th with your new account number and CID number. Use these to access the new online customer portal. If you don't receive by July 17th, 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:

We reviewed the first video cuts of our new advertising campaign produced by LampStand, that is paid for from Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT), and intended to bring in overnight visitors to Surfside Beach. They are really good! The short social media ads focus on why our little Village is so cool in a variety of different ways...surfing, fishing, birding, beach activities, restaurants, etc. They also zeroed in on a few locals who shared their personal stories and glimpse into what Surfside means to them. I believe that you will all like what you see. We will try to share a glimpse of the content on our FB site soon, and will be working with an advertising agency to target a larger social media campaign designed to entice visitors to come and enjoy Surfside, and then measure those results to make sure STRS are benefiting from the advertisements. More to come!

We entered into an agreement with Granicus this month to upgrade and update our short term rental (STR) software system. The transition will be occurring over the next few months. It may require some new and different data required to populate our STR database, so if you have rental(s), please be aware of upcoming requests for more information. The information on STRs will be used to build a database, then utilized to market your rentals through advertisements around the Village, on billboards, and through social media. For those who are registered, the new system will be an upgrade for STR owners as well. It has features to help you manage your STRs, make payments, and funnel customers to you through our STR database and advertising. On the flip side, the new system has already identified roughly 350 STRs that are NOT currently registered NOR paying HOT to Surfside. With this new system, we will get everyone properly registered and paying their HOT to Surfside, or they will face stiff fines and penalties, according to our ordinances and court recommendations. Each registered STR will be given a unique numbered license plate to be displayed visibly from the street, that will be used to provide visible proof of STR registration. Any residence found to be operating a STR without this registration will also have to deal with consequences of the violation. I mean, it's only fair isn't it?

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

Enjoy the sun and surf... and stay safe.

Thanks,

Zach