

From the Mayor's desk – 9/12/25

Happy Friday!

Lots of good stuff happening this week that I'm excited to share with you. Let's get to it...

Police Department:

Planning is in motion for the celebration of Surfside Beach's 50th anniversary that will coincide with the fireworks display on the jetty. The date for the festivities and fireworks show is October 25th. I'm really looking forward to this celebration of Surfside and excited for the possibilities. Much more to come on this festivity in the weeks ahead.

Chief Hester wanted to share that the main PD office phone number (x1597) is not attended in the off hours. If you call and leave a message to report something that needs immediate attention, it just won't happen as our officers are out on patrols. Instead, calling the dispatch number (979) 864-2392 will connect you with our on duty police officers immediately. Please call (979) 864-2392 to make contact with the off hours VOSB police patrol officers, or you can always call Chief Hester directly at (979) 482-2324.

Last but not least, Chief Hester will be hosting a town hall meeting on September 25th in the City Hall Council room at 6pm. Please attend to hear from the Chief and share your thoughts and opinions on the police efforts in Surfside Beach.

EMS Department:

City Council approved the purchase of a used ambulance that will be the replacement for our current one that is rapidly running out of useful life. We plan to operate the old ambulance primarily on and around the beach, along with non-emergency transports off the island until it finally stops running. The replacement ambulance is a 2018 4x4 diesel with just under 100,000 miles. Not new by any means but it is a significant improvement for the Village and our EMS department. It is an investment in our emergency medical services that should be with us to serve the public properly for a number of years to come.

Beach & Parks:

Reminder that we have a few road projects scheduled for October in conjunction with Brazoria County roads department. We purchase and pay for the materials and they perform the work by supplying the equipment & labor. These will be asphalt repairs on

Beach Drive, Swordfish, and a few entrances to roads off Bluewater Hwy, the worst being Francis Cove. We have an interlocal agreement with the county to target up to 4 road asphalt projects per year. The request for these 4 projects is due on November 15th for the 2026 calendar year. If you have suggestions for asphalt road repairs that you want to be considered, please contact a City Council member or myself. We should select the 4 that most benefit the public.

Speaking of roads, Toby gave an update at this week's City Council meeting and let everyone know that they have installed over 55,000 pounds of road asphalt so far this year. That is impressive and a huge thanks to the crew that has been patching the roads one shovel full at a time since Beryl. They really don't get enough credit for their work. Thanks!

We are transitioning from the seasonal work crews to the permanent staffing and as a result have 4 openings currently for full time Beach & Parks workers. If interested, please contact City Hall.

Finance:

Great news out of the Finance department related to the Groins project funding that was shared by Amanda at the City Council meeting this week. We have just over \$2 million in Hotel Tax (HOT) funds in savings that has been earmarked to pay for our required financial contribution of the Surfside Groin and Beach Nourishment Project. Well, Amanda and I learned this week that we have \$6.2MM of RESTORE award funds that were assigned over to the GLO on our behalf in 2019 and then approved by TCEQ in 2020. As a result of the RESTORE funds, the GLO considers that to be the Village's financial contribution to the project (GLO contract No. 19-226-020-C050). The remainder of the project budget is comprised of \$2 million in GLO/CEPRA funds. The VOSB has no further financial obligation!!! This is great news and effectively puts \$2 million back into our savings account that per Texas HB1915 can only be used to clean and maintain public beaches, or for an erosion response project, or to clean and maintain bay shores.

Public Works:

Again, We will be offering a \$5 utility bill credit to every account that signs up for e-billing by January 1st. This credit will hit your account by March 1st. If you need help to get registered and sign up for e-billing, Breana at City Hall would be happy to assist you.

Waste Connections had communicated a 6% increase in their rates back in August. We have been in negotiations with them on the increase and at City Council meeting evaluated one option by WC to return to 1X per week trash collection at a 7% rate reduction, but Council denied that option. More negotiations are underway and I will continue to keep you all updated of any potential changes, and increases in trash rates. Any rate increase to VOSB customers would have to be brought before Council for approval prior.

As previously communicated, after this month's utility (water) billing cycle we will be making contact using red "Disconnect Notice" hang tags on doorknobs to all properties that are 60+ days overdue. The utility bill must be paid in full within 10 days of notification with our hang tag. If your bill is not paid in 10 days, your water will be shut off. Then, in order to reconnect water service, 1) your bill must be paid in full, 2) a reconnection fee of \$200 must be paid, and 3) a deposit of \$75 additional must also be paid. **Please make sure that you pay any outstanding utility bills in order to maintain water service at your home/property.** We DO NOT want to disconnect water to anyone's home.

Other Items of Interest:

Coming up on October 4th the Old Guys Surf Reunion will be held at Stahlman Park. Always a great event, so mark your calendars and make it out for that!

At City Council meeting this week, we had Chris Kneupper provide an update on the building of the replica of Fort Velasco. In short, the structure will be significantly smaller in scope and cost to complete than previously planned. In addition it will be planned to be built on Brazoria County property adjacent to Jetty Park. The county (Not VOSB) will be responsible for the costs of construction and future maintenance for the new "Fort Velasco Discovery Center". We will continue to own and maintain the historical timeline fence and monument where they stand today. This is great news that the historical structure will be moving forward in and around Surfside Beach, and that the financial burden to construct and maintain will not fall to the Village for funding. A win-win for Surfside in my opinion!

Our first sample advertising drop was released primarily for residents to get a glimpse of the type of content and quality we intend to feature nationwide to attract visitors. It is one of several short videos highlighting activities that are available in and around Surfside to visitors. This one is a short glimpse into surfing in Surfside Beach, including how to learn from the School of Surf, and a visit to the Surfside Surf Station. It was shared earlier this week on the "Visit Surfside Beach" Facebook page. It is one of many short videos that feature activities, attractions, local businesses and people who live and work in the community. This one ties together with another short video that shows a family on vacation

in Surfside who enjoy surfing lessons taught by School of Surf during one of the days of their stay. The advertisements approved last year by Council and paid for 100% from hotel occupancy taxes (HOT) are targeted towards attracting overnight guests to Surfside. The goal is to entice visitors to come and stay at our hotels and short term rental houses, to shop, eat, and drink locally, and enjoy what we have to offer. I'd ask you to check it out, like the video and forward it freely through social media. The official launch of the full spectrum of media content is still to come.

As always, I hope that you have a great day in wonderful Surfside Beach! I hope to see you around this weekend.

Thanks,

Zach