



**REMARKS BY CITY COUNCIL MEMBER MONTY PARKS AT THE
Coastal Georgia Regional Water Council Meeting
September 8, 2023**

I was asked to speak about Tybee's water at a recent meeting of the Regional Water committee. I thought that the remarks would give some facts and a little information about our fine water department and the good work they do....

Good afternoon....

Thank you for inviting me to speak today...although you may regret having an elected official in front of a captive audience and allowed to brag on his city....

Tybee Island water services are the sole source of water for our community of about 5,000 homesteads and about 150 businesses. This includes several hotels, multiple commercial laundries and other high water usage locations. There is not an industrial operation on the island. We do not produce the T-shirts that we sell.

We currently operate three separate wells and two water towers. Renovations on one tower were just recently completed and the second tower is scheduled for repair soon.

Our water department includes eleven employees. The department has earned gold star awards over the years and provides excellent service to our community. We have good reason to be very proud of the work these folks do.

We are a stable community as far as growth is concerned, unlike some of the cities here today. There is no Hyundai plant going in on Tybee. The focus for expenses is on repair and maintenance of existing infrastructure. We recently passed a large bond issue to finance a series of major water and sewer activities. This includes replacing lines dating from the early 1900's. We have 30 miles of pipeline and 548 valves.

Peak water usage is, of course, in July, when our monthly daily average is 1.1 million gallons. This is down a little from the Covid peak of 1.233 million gallons per day. Our permit allows us to average 1.8 million gallons per day, so you can see we are well below our permitted draw.

Alternate sources of water is a large, ongoing discussion. There is no evidence of any saltwater intrusion, but still, having only the one source is a little bit worrisome. Other options include a line from Savannah, which would have to go over multiple bridges and miles of Federally protected wetlands. Also, there have been efforts to establish a deep well to the Cretaceous aquifer, with very frustrating results. Recently, there have been discussions about exploring desalinization, however, there has been no movement in that direction.

On the subject of alternate water sources....a little over ten years ago, the city shut off the foot showers by the beach. This was done to reduce the draw on the aquifer. The foot washes were sorely missed. Then, maybe seven years ago, we launched a trial with shallow wells at our North Beach Plaza. The effort proved so successful that we have expanded the shallow well program to showers and foot rinse stations on the South end of the beach as well. While not a significant source of water, as compared to our monthly daily average of 1.1 million gallons, the young children who are no longer sticky and sand covered at the end of a day think this is great.

Our near future seems to consist of a stable water supply, well below our permit levels, and a steady demand. We will continue to upgrade our existing lines and look forward to a reliable system for decades to come.

Thanks again.....

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