



# TYBEE ISLAND

## GEORGIA

March 9, 2025

Greetings Mayor and Council!

The Mayor and I took a day trip to Charleston on Thursday with a group of Chatham County civic and business leaders led by the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce. We all rode the Amtrak train there and back – a quick and convenient alternative to driving that I recommend.

There, we listened to panels comprised of leaders from Chatham and Charleston discuss a range of issues, from regionalism to tourism to transportation and housing. Mayor West was one of the day's hits with his delightful take on Tybee uniqueness while serving on a "City to City" panel with the mayors of Mount Pleasant and Summerville.

It was a long but very productive day, and good to see our neighbors in South Carolina grappling with many of the same issues that we're facing. I took advantage of the train ride home to hammer out a gameplan with the Assistant County Manager on the County's share of beach renourishment and strategy surrounding SPLOST, which is likely to go before voters this November.

### Fire Station Action

As you know, one of Tybee's potential SPLOST projects is a new fire station. I've been working with Chief McMillian to refine space needs, and with our architectural consultant to explore various siting locations in Memorial Park. I've also investigated three potentially suitable properties on Butler Avenue, and had discussions with two of the property owners.

Beyond SPLOST, we are exploring other ways to fund this critical public safety facility.

Sen. Ossoff announced that his office would begin accepting Congressionally Directed Spending requests on Feb. 24. Congressionally Directed Spending projects are high-impact projects located in Georgia that can be jumpstarted or reach completion with assistance from the federal government.

On Feb. 27, we submitted a request to Sen. Ossoff through our federal lobbyist for 75% of the \$12 million estimated cost of Tybee's new fire station. The request is attached.

Last week our Senate Bill 78, which created a City of Tybee Island Building and Public Facilities Authority, passed the House 172-0, and will now be sent to the Governor for signature. The Facilities Authority, which will have bonding authority, could potentially provide another funding mechanism to finance fire station construction.

## Legislative Update

Last Thursday was Crossover Day in Georgia, the day by which a bill must pass out of its originating legislative chamber to be considered by the other chamber before the end of Legislative Session and become law.

While our request for a Public Facilities Authority did make it through, we were unable to gain traction with our request for a Municipal Option Sales Tax referendum due to opposition from a key member of our Legislative Delegation. It is very common for tax-related proposals to fail the first go-around. I believe a MOST remains a good infrastructure funding option for Tybee Island due to our strong sales tax base. We will spend time before the next Legislative Session making our case.

Our State Legislative Lobbyist on Friday offered the below Crossover Day update on other legislation of interest. Attached also is his February Legislative Activity Report.

### Homelessness:

- Senate Bill 170 which would create the Georgia Interagency Council for the Homeless passed the Senate. See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/70340>
- House Bill 295 which would have established procedures for real property owners to make claims for compensation for loss of property value or expenses incurred from local governments which fail to enforce laws or ordinances often correlated with homelessness. See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/69969>

### Tax Assessment Cap Opt-out Blowback:

- House Bill 92 is still pending in the Senate to require annual votes to opt-out of the statewide assessment cap for homesteaded properties for local governments and schools which have opted-out previously. See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/69431>
- House Bill 370 failed to crossover. This legislation would require property tax bills to have the following in bold print, "[Name of the political subdivision] chose to opt out of property tax relief for homeowners by a vote of [name of the governing authority of the political subdivision] on [the date of opt out vote]. If you have concerns about that decision, please call [the main telephone number for the levying or recommending authority of the political subdivision]." See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/70132>

### Speed Cameras in School Zones:

- House Bill 651 and House Bill 225 are the two speed cameras in school zones bills that crossed over. Both will be heard in the Senate Public Safety Committee.
- HB 225 is the repeal bill: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/69778>
- HB 651 would place parameters on the law: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/70850>

- Municipal Sovereign Immunity:
- House Bill 531 passed the House which would create liability caps on lawsuits against cities at \$3 million per person and \$5 million per occurrence. It would be prudent to check with your city's insurance carrier to assess how these caps would impact premiums should this measure become law. See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/70514>
- Disturbing Trend on Deannexation Legislation:
- House Bill 521 would create a 90 day "shot clock" for cities to respond to requests by county governments to deannex county properties from cities. This language is at the request of Henry County which desires to deannex 500 acres from the city of McDonough. Language was inserted on crossover day into the legislation in a House Rules Committee substitute version of HB 521 that would give Paulding County veto power over any proposed annexation into the city of Dallas. See: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/70501>

### **AWR Monthly Report**

Below is the monthly activity report for consultant AWR:

#### **Accomplished**

- Developed and submitted earmark request with Warwick Partners for USDA Rural Community Facilities grant to help fund a new Fire Station for consideration by Rep. Carter, Sen. Ossoff, and Sen. Warnock for Congressional Discretionary Spending (CDS) Grant.
- Stormwater Management Plan presented at Council Workshop February 5.
- Greenline developed site specific layout for Fire Station in front of the Gym in Memorial Park.
- Council approved GHD contract for design and engineering for north dune project.
- Measured beach and made recommendations for Beach Vendors for upcoming season.
- Beach has been tilled for the season.

#### **Next steps**

- NFWF Final Design and Permit Project formal launch expected March. Finalizing Agreements with UGA, GA Tech, and Thomas & Hutton.
- Safe Shelter project on hold pending hire of Fire Chief and Fire Station location.
- Consider inviting Clark Alexander of Skidaway to present beach and dune monitoring update at future Council Workshop.

Timing and Budget: All projects within time frames and budget.

Concerns/Issues: Safe Shelter FEMA grant at risk if no progress made within next 3 months.

### **Projects Management**

- EPA 15th Street Drainage – awaiting grant approval from EPA.
- GEMA 14th Street Drainage – awaiting grant approval from FEMA.
- NFWF Back River Design & Permit – launch March 2025.
- USACE Nearshore Placement – possible Autumn of 2025.
- USACE Beach Nourishment – planning for 2026 execution.
- Skidaway Dune Monitoring – Quarterly reviews, Council update at future workshop.
- North Dune build – Council approved hire of GHD for design and engineering.
- South Sandbar – working with Chief McMillian and staff on proposal.

## **Alcohol Server Training Enforcement**

As you know, a group of City staffers has begun meeting to sketch out the creation of a marketing campaign to discourage drunken driving. Last year we made more than 250 DUI arrests on the island, the most in recent memory. We've pulled together some very interesting data about the demographics of our typical DUI arrest, including age, sex, and home addresses. Councilman Ploughe has been a great champion of this effort, and will participate in upcoming planning sessions with staff.

One of the strategies we discussed in these planning meetings was enforcement of the serving training ordinance passed by City Council in 2021. Sec. 6-6 of the Code of Ordinances states that all employees who pour or serve alcoholic beverages shall secure a certificate showing completion of a server training program approved by the City. This certificate must be kept on premises by the alcohol license holder, a copy of which must be produced upon request.

The City has never enforced this Ordinance. Our Code Compliance Department has developed a plan to hold informational meetings with alcohol license holders over the next month re-educating them about the Ordinance, and then begin conducting random checks in May. Penalties will include a warning following by progressively increasing fines, culminating with a potential show cause hearing before City Council on the fifth offense.

While enforcement of the server training ordinance will not be the silver bullet for reducing drunken driving, it is an important tool to encourage our alcohol-serving establishments to be part of the solution.

Attached is a letter we plan to send out to license holders in coming weeks.

## **Parking Plans**

We continue to work on parking solutions across the island for various organizations. Frankly, we are all over the place with this. We allow the Shriners Club to print 140 parking passes for its special event customers. We avoid parking enforcement around the Tybee Post Theater during shows. We struggle to come up with a parking solution that works for the customers and employees of the YMCA.

We've been meeting with each of these organizations to understand their unique parking requirements, while attempting to bring some standards and consistency across the island.

We are starting with a parking validation pilot program with the Tybee Post Theater. The program will allow customers to purchase reduced-cost parking while they are purchasing show tickets online. Ticketholders would print the event parking pass at home, and place in their windshield while parking for the show.

If the program works, we will look to extend it to other organizations across Tybee.

We are simultaneously working on a standard allotment of transferable passes for Tybee nonprofit organizations, with some procedures for those seeking more. More on this to come.

## The Week in Infrastructure

### Public Works

- Cleared outfalls, storm basins and inlets
- Performed repairs on the warning sign box for the South End Beach
- Continued installing the new fence at the North Beach parking lot
- Repaired employee gate at DPW yard
- Worked on electrical issues and lighting at 17<sup>th</sup> Street bathrooms
- Swept streets on Monday and Friday
- Picked up street trash on Tuesday and Friday
- Picked up litter from beach
- Cleaned City-owned facilities
- Blew parks and South-end Business District
- Prepped softball diamond for charity softball game
- Installed pine straw at various locations in front of City buildings and parks

### Fleet

- Performed preventative maintenance on air compressor
- Performed oil changes on two police cars
- Repaired tire on police cruiser
- Performed weekly inspection of fuel tanks and pumps
- Performed repair work on trailer hitch
- Continued to work on Can-Ams for Ocean Rescue as parts arrive
  - Brakes and calipers
  - Hubs and Rotors
- Continued to work on Campground's Kubota tractor as parts came in
- Performed maintenance on various DPW vehicles
- Performed routine maintenance on various pieces of small equipment
- Welded DPW entry gate

### Management

- Met with resident about drainage issue on their property at 10 Bright Street
- Attended various Orange Crush coordination meetings
- Attended weekly meeting with Live Oak Fiber
- Worked on new schedule to eliminate all scheduled overtime
- Coordinated issues on the following projects
  - Captain's View Paving (Punch list items)
  - North End Sanitary Sewer (Final quantities)
  - WWTP Maintenance Building (Upcoming scheduling)
- Finalized lease paperwork for street sweeper
- Performed four tree assessments and issued four tree permits

## Water and Sewer

- Worked on low pressure issue at 14<sup>th</sup> Street restrooms
- Performed maintenance on the water wells and lift stations
- Performed weekly sampling and testing
- Cleaned out sanitary sewer manholes
- Replaced leaking saddle on water main
- Worked on high consumption leak list and informed homeowners
- Replaced broken meter boxes and lids
- Performed maintenance on the foot showers
- Coordinated and talked to contractors on private side water leaks at the following addresses:
  - 1207 Bay Street
  - 710 Jones Avenue
  - 1312 Butler Avenue
  - IGA

## Recycling/Dump

- Picked up and emptied recycling trailers from Memorial Park and Polk Street
- Baled cardboard
- Picked up litter on Bay Street
- Collected recycling from South Annex Building
- Assisted residents in unloading trash, yard debris, and recycling brought to DPW yard
- Collected aluminum can roll-offs for business pilot recycling program

Below are year-end recycling totals for 2024, with comparisons to the previous five years. As you can see, our totals were the lowest they've been since the start of the drop-off program. Staff has already met to begin re-envisioning our recycling infrastructure, an effort that has been given a massive boost with receipt of the \$228,000 DNR Sustainability Grant.

TYBEE ISLAND RECYCLING TOTALS – 2019 TO 2024							
	CARDBOARD	ALUMINUM	PLASTICS	PAPER	TIN/METAL	GLASS	TOTAL
2019 (OCT. - DEC.)	11,680	2,025	1,390	0	26,360	0	41,455
2020	200,540	25,880	20,280	30,230	137,640	0	414,570
2021	265,780	23,060	21,460	35,925	119,180	0	465,405
2022	308,600	17,420	31,780	29,925	122,800	0	510,525
2023	251,740	16,340	33,060	32,690	130,360	32,140	496,330
2024	165,500	20,200	30,320	28,590	125,960	17,500	388,070

## The Week with Police

### Accidents:

This Week: 2 accidents, 0 injuries  
 2025 YTD: 12 accidents, 1 injury  
 2024 YTD: 4 accidents, 1 injury  
 2024 TOTAL: 104 accidents, 18 injuries

### Calls For Service:

This week: 460  
 2025 YTD: 2,147  
 2024 YTD: 2,638  
 2024 TOTAL: 14,588

### Arrests:

This Week: 11 total – 7 DUIs / 0 Felony  
 2025 YTD: 55 arrests  
 2024 YTD: 85 arrests  
 2024 TOTAL: 504 arrests

### Citations:

This week: 33  
 YTD: 193  
 2024 YTD: 402  
 2024 TOTAL: 1,792

Part 1 Crimes									
	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Arson	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total Part 1
2025	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
2024	0	3	0	10	3	51	0	0	67
2023	0	0	3	8	2	37	0	0	50
2022	0	0	0	2	1	17	2	1	23

### Daily Information:

03/03: Lt. White completed Glock Armorer Recertification in Atlanta.

03/04: 9-1-1 Supervisor Erin Martinez and Adam from MCA viewed the inside of the Mobile Command vehicle and the best way to install the new mobile radios and CAD stations.

### Staffing:

- We will be down 5 officers March 27. We are reviewing three applications, as well as a potential candidate currently in the police academy. Three interviews were conducted on March 7.
- We have held several Orange Crush meetings

### Upcoming Events:

03/14: Road Safety Checkpoint 5pm-9pm U.S. 80 at Chimney Creek.

03/15: The Tybee Island Police Department is preparing for large crowds on Saturday, March 15, for the Tybee Island Heritage Parade.

03/17: Tybee Island police officers will be assisting the City of Savannah Police Department for their parade on March 17. These two officers will be paid off duty by the City of Savannah. This will not accrue overtime.

03/30: Please mark your calendars for our 1<sup>st</sup> Touch a Truck event in Memorial Park! This will include city departments and outside jurisdictions.

03/31: Meeting with Georgia State Patrol about the upcoming Orange Crush Event.

I'm proud to say that this year, four of our officers have been nominated for "Best Law Enforcement Officer" in Connect Magazine's "Best of Savannah" awards. Chief Hayes has also been nominated in the "Best Public Servant" category. Voting began on February 10. We're encouraging everyone to take time to vote for our brothers and sisters, and bring this award back to Tybee for the third year in a row.

## This Week at the Fire Department

- 18 calls for service
  - 0-Fire calls
  - 6-Medical Calls
  - 2-Manpower calls/Lift Assists
  - 2-False Alarms
  - 1-Rescue (power line down)
- 
- This week Fire came up with a concrete plan to get our side-by-sides functional by the start of the season. This has been difficult due to shortage of mechanics who can work on them and supply chain issues for parts. Every season the side by sides need substantial work to get them ready for operation. We operate in one of the most hostile and corrosive environments for these machines imaginable.
  - Two new full-time firefighters started this week and are very enthusiastic to be at TIFR. Recruitment should be helped tremendously when we make the switch to the new 48/96 schedule.
  - The addition of the full-timers and our three new part-time personnel are already showing results in reducing the amount of OT shifts needed at the FD.

## Municipal Court Update

Court was held on Feb. 25. The following are dispositions:

Bond Forfeiture	13
Bound over to State Court	7
Guilty as Charged	2
Nolle Prosequi	3
Pre-trial diversion	7
Warning	13

## Around the Campground

- 92 Arrivals, 495 Site Nights, 68% Occupancy
- Maintenance worker Rusty Mitchell completed the National School of Outdoor Hospitality, the industry leader in campground education.
- Hosted a group from UGA in our cabins that were doing volunteer work on the island.
- Had 7 guests attend the paint and sip event.
- Started taking reservations for 2026.
- Celebrated Skip the Straw Day by offering a discount on our souvenir reusable cups and straws.

## Human Resources Update

### Fire Department

- 1 Full Time Firefighter offer made and accepted. Candidate going through pre-employment process now.
- 2 Part Time Firefighter offers made and accepted. 1 candidate has cleared and is ready to fill in as needed. 1 candidate going through the pre-employment process

### City Manager & City Clerk Evaluation Process

- Councilman Garbett requested a meeting with HR to discuss how we complete this process for City employees.
- HR Director met with two council members, Bill Garbett and Kathryn Williams, to discuss this on Wednesday, 1/29.
- In this meeting the HR Director went through the employee process and recommended that Council follow the same.
- In conclusion of the meeting, the Council Members planned to put a timeline together and reach out to the rest of Council, as well as both the City Manager and City Clerk, to establish goals for each of them for 2025. At that time they would also discuss a collective evaluation for each employee at the end of the calendar year with a potential mid-year check in, and then begin following the same schedule as City employees going forward.

### Other Updates

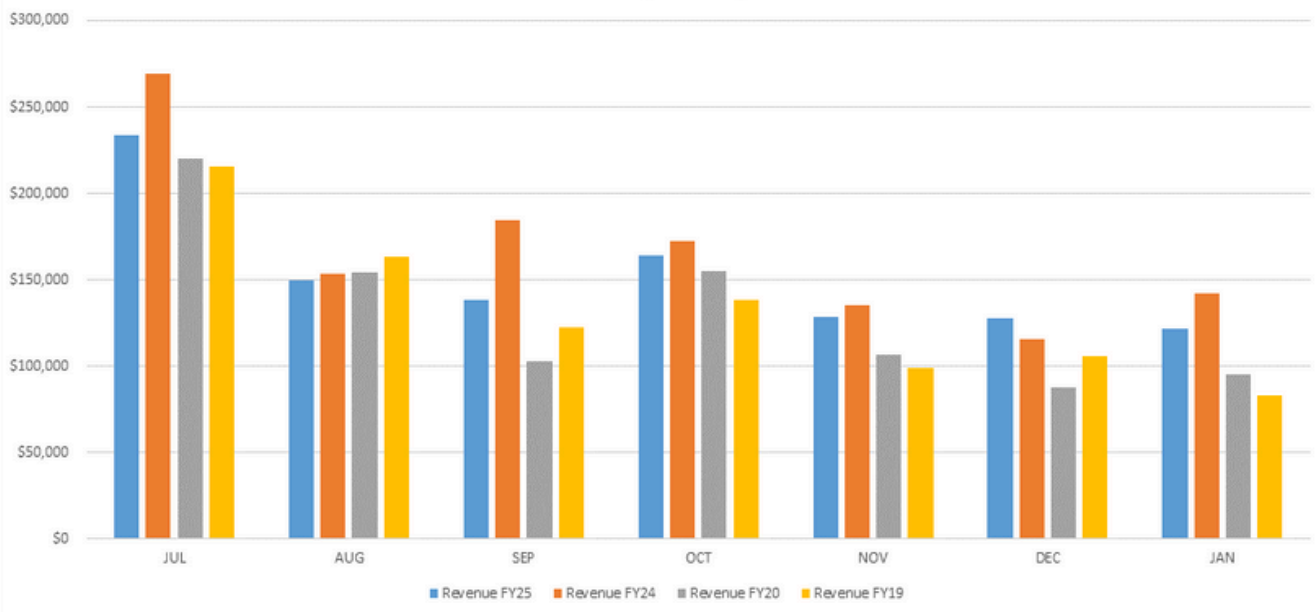
- Employee Recognition Dinner: Planning is being finalized for the annual Employee Recognition Dinner where we recognize employee's for their years of service (5, 10, 15, 20, etc). The event will take place on Thursday, March 6, at 6pm at the Tybee Lite Shrine Club. Council and City employees will be receiving their invitations next week.
- Jaime Spear, HR Director, recently received her SHRM certification as a Workplace Mental Health Ally. She completed a total of eight online courses through SHRM's Psych Hub that included courses on mental health stigma, suicidal behavior, workplace safety planning, overcoming bias in the workplace and workplace effective communication.

### Around the Campground

- 51 Arrivals, 466 Site Nights, 64% Occupancy
- 9 Guests participated in paint and sip party
- Replaced deteriorated duct work under Upper Bathhouse
- Installed water meter on pool to track usage which will help identify future leaks

FY25		JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	
555-0000-34-7520	Camping Fees	\$160,132.49	\$110,339.97	\$105,376.62	\$117,389.77	\$99,489.16	\$102,726.67	\$107,886.00	\$803,340.68
555-0000-34-7521	Tent Site Fees	\$14,500.70	\$7,583.41	\$6,479.50	\$11,457.94	\$4,821.03	\$1,384.00	\$888.40	\$47,114.98
555-000-34-7522	Cabin Taxable	\$34,773.85	\$18,367.14	\$13,527.00	\$15,083.12	\$11,092.57	\$11,443.49	\$3,520.00	\$107,807.17
555-0000-34-7523	Cabin Tax Exempt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
555-0000-34-7530	Camp Store Sales	\$13,690.01	\$9,315.44	\$9,376.78	\$13,011.38	\$9,812.31	\$8,585.96	\$7,915.85	\$71,707.73
555-0000-34-7534	Misc Revenue	\$7,166.12	\$2,672.73	\$2,257.09	\$6,151.46	\$2,757.70	\$3,348.13	\$1,257.10	\$25,610.33
555-0000-34-7538	Parking Pass Revenue	\$3,150.00	\$1,260.00	\$1,050.00	\$1,290.00	\$600.00	\$0.00	30	\$7,380.00
		<b>\$233,413.17</b>	<b>\$149,538.69</b>	<b>\$138,066.99</b>	<b>\$164,383.67</b>	<b>\$128,572.77</b>	<b>\$127,488.25</b>	<b>\$121,497.35</b>	<b>\$1,062,960.89</b>
FY24									
555-0000-34-7520	Camping Fees	\$194,511.29	\$112,479.47	\$131,942.58	\$123,521.33	\$107,792.41	\$92,909.00	\$129,850.00	\$893,006.08
555-0000-34-7521	Tent Site Fees	\$8,025.90	\$2,355.60	\$10,057.23	\$10,353.83	\$5,208.02	\$1,887.97	\$1,161.63	\$39,050.18
555-000-34-7522	Cabin Taxable	\$42,627.18	\$24,022.30	\$26,005.53	\$21,324.85	\$10,918.19	\$7,477.69	\$2,368.00	\$134,743.74
555-0000-34-7523	Cabin Tax Exempt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
555-0000-34-7530	Camp Store Sales	\$15,040.58	\$9,611.62	\$11,597.73	\$12,573.86	\$8,053.21	\$8,647.73	\$7,259.15	\$72,783.88
555-0000-34-7534	Misc Revenue	\$4,783.94	\$2,612.41	\$3,096.53	\$3,090.14	\$2,738.02	\$4,581.35	\$960.62	\$21,863.01
555-0000-34-7538	Parking Pass Revenue	\$4,380.00	\$2,340.00	\$2,130.00	\$1,410.00	\$480.00	\$60.00	90	\$10,890.00
		<b>\$269,368.89</b>	<b>\$153,421.40</b>	<b>\$184,829.60</b>	<b>\$172,274.01</b>	<b>\$135,189.85</b>	<b>\$115,563.74</b>	<b>\$141,689.40</b>	<b>\$1,172,336.89</b>
YoY									
555-0000-34-7520	Camping Fees	(\$34,378.80)	(\$2,139.50)	(\$26,565.96)	(\$6,131.56)	(\$8,303.25)	\$9,817.67	(\$21,964.00)	(\$89,665.40)
555-0000-34-7521	Tent Site Fees	\$6,474.80	\$5,227.81	(\$3,577.73)	\$1,104.11	(\$386.99)	(\$503.97)	(\$273.23)	\$8,064.80
555-000-34-7522	Cabin Taxable	(\$7,853.33)	(\$5,655.16)	(\$12,478.53)	(\$6,241.73)	\$174.38	\$3,965.80	\$1,152.00	(\$26,936.57)
555-0000-34-7523	Cabin Tax Exempt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
555-0000-34-7530	Camp Store Sales	(\$1,350.57)	(\$296.18)	(\$2,220.95)	\$437.52	\$1,759.10	(\$61.77)	\$656.70	(\$1,076.15)
555-0000-34-7534	Misc Revenue	\$2,382.18	\$60.32	(\$839.44)	\$3,061.32	\$19.68	(\$1,233.22)	\$296.48	\$3,747.32
555-0000-34-7538	Parking Pass Revenue	(\$1,230.00)	(\$1,080.00)	(\$1,080.00)	(\$120.00)	\$120.00	(\$60.00)	(\$60.00)	(\$3,510.00)
		<b>(\$35,955.72)</b>	<b>(\$3,882.71)</b>	<b>(\$46,762.61)</b>	<b>(\$7,890.34)</b>	<b>(\$6,617.08)</b>	<b>\$11,924.51</b>	<b>(\$20,192.05)</b>	<b>(\$109,376.00)</b>
		-13%	-3%	-25%	-5%	-5%	10%	-14%	-9.33%

Revenue Comparison by Month



*Bret Bell*

Bret Bell, City Manager