

City Council Weekly Update - June 29, 2025

From Bret Bell <bret.bell@cityoftybee.gov>
Date Sun 6/29/2025 9:20 PM
To #Council <#Council@cityoftybee.org>
Cc #Dept Heads <#DeptHeads@cityoftybee.org>

 2 attachments (11 MB)

Summer DD Campaign_6.25.25 Update.pdf; American Travel Sentiment - Wave 97 - Highlights.pdf;

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Super excited as we head into Tybee's Super Bowl Weekend, aka the 4th of July Holiday. Flags have been hung across the island, and they look great. We plan to use cones to create an emergency lane through the center of U.S. 80/Butler, as we did last year. Here's to clear skies, sober driving, flowing traffic and good old-fashioned family fun on Tybee Island.

A reminder of Independence Day activities:

10 a.m.: Bike Parade festivities begin at Memorial Park. Following a pre-parade performance, the parade will roll south on 2nd Avenue, cross Butler to Tybrisa, down Strand to 18th Street, and head back on Lovell to the Park. The bicyclists will be escorted by Police the entire route.
7 p.m.: Purple Madness, a Prince Tribute Band, on the Pier and Pavilion.
9ish p.m.: Fireworks over the Ocean

God Bless Tybee Island and America!

Some \$ Wins for Tybee Island

A good week on the money front! While the books have yet to close, it looks like we will end Fiscal Year 2025 in much better shape than anticipated over the winter.

As you will recall, a series of named and unnamed storms over the late summer and fall left us more than \$1 million in the hole. We responded by tightening up expenditures across the board, including changing our approach to overtime, holding off on many discretionary purchases, and implementing a hiring freeze for most vacant positions.

The approach, combined with strong parking revenue this spring, worked. We are no longer expecting a significant draw from our reserve funds. Kudos to all of Team Tybee for pulling together!

County Comes Through

Some more good revenue news came this past Friday, when the Chatham County Commission passed a budget adjustment with our requested \$2 million contribution for the federal beach renourishment project.

The Mayor and I have engaged in sustained lobbying with County administration in recent months to secure the funding, which looked in doubt as the County struggled with funding challenges for its new fire department. Photos sent to County leaders last week of recent mid-beach erosion and the closure of the 2nd Street Crossover lent some urgency to the request. In the end, the County elected to utilize excess revenue from SPLOST 7 tax proceeds, which have come in much stronger than projected.

As you know, the next federal renourishment is expected to cost \$20 million, of which \$12 million will be paid for the Army Corps of Engineers. Tybee is expected to cover the \$8 million balance, which will include a \$4 million contribution from the State that we lobbied hard for, \$2 million from the County, and \$2 million from our beach reserve fund that utilizes hotel-motel tax proceeds.

While the renourishment won't occur until fall 2026, we will be expected to come up with our \$8 million share later this year or early next year when the Corps begins the procurement process.

If the SPLOST 8 Referendum passes this November, Tybee will not need to rely on the County for the following renourishment in 2032 or 2033. That's because SPLOST 8 will include an \$8 million allocation for beach renourishment, which we expect to be enough to cover the County's portion of the local match in addition to beach work outside the federally authorized nourishment area and a required study for the next 50-year authorization.

The SPLOST 8 Intergovernmental Agreement with the County and other municipalities will be on the July 10 City Council Agenda.

GEFA Loan Comes Through

Also on the next Council Agenda will be acceptance of a \$2.5 million loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) to fund critical sewer line replacements this year in the Fort Screven area.

GEFA loans are new to Tybee, but are a common and important tool for municipalities across Georgia to fund critical infrastructure improvements. They can only be used to fund water, sewer and stormwater improvement projects. The State authority pools risk across multiple governments to offer lower rates than most jurisdictions can receive on their own.

Interest on Tybee's loan will be 2.49 percent, with repayment amortized over 20 years. As you will recall, the FY26 Budget includes a 5 percent rate increase in January to help service this debt.

Special thanks to Finance Director Jen Amerell, who strategized with GEFA officials and our financial consultant through the spring to set our loan application up for success.

Community Development

LiveOak Fiber

- LiveOak announced its first active Internet customer – the resident at 6 Taylor Street.
- As of June 25, LiveOak Fiber/Coastal production crews installed 3,840 linear feet of conduit and passed 52 homes.
- Total linear conduit placed to date: 79,010 ft (14.96 miles); 1,269 homes passed, approximately 2/3 complete for Tybee Island.
- Fencing is complete around the cabinet at 78 Van Horn. Bollards, privacy screening, and permanent erosion control measures will be installed in the next few weeks.
- US 80/Butler Avenue crossings are ongoing/permitted by GDOT.

DNR RWD Grant

The RFP for the purchase of 100 recycling containers is live on our website. Staff has submitted the quarterly report to DNR.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

FEMA, GEMA, and the City of Tybee Island have officially closed out our first house raising grant, 4294-0004. In this grant, we successfully raised five homes. Construction costs were funded by the following: FEMA, 75%; Property Owners, 15%; GEMA, 10%. Project management fees were covered by the city.

Total Final Project Cost: \$ 860,266.23

- FEMA Share Amount: \$ 645,199.67
- Local Share Amount: \$ 129,039.94
- State Share Amount: \$ 86,026.62

The second grant, 4338-0004, is still in a holding pattern. The period of performance (POP) for both Batch One and Batch Two ends May 27, 2026, meaning all work must be done by this date. Currently, three houses have been elevated in Batch One, and one home is in the works. Staff is waiting on word for the reimbursements to the three completed properties for the Batch One cost overruns. Batch Two has not started and there is staff concern that Batch Two will not be awarded anytime soon, as FEMA and GEMA has informed us that no extensions will be authorized for the POP. Until we have a definitive answer from FEMA, staff remains ready to submit any additional cost estimates and remain committed to moving the Batch Two properties forward.

With the uncertainty of Batch Two, the small number of property owners who have indicated they are still interested, budget constraints, and concern the grant management costs will be incurred 100 percent by the City, staff is not putting forward the third-party grant management contract extension with FCMC, due to expire on June 30, 2025. We will manage the remainder of Batch One, and Batch Two when/if awarded, in-house.

Land Development Code Update

The next Open House for the Land Development Code Update is scheduled for July 23, 2025, at 5:30 pm at the Guard House. This will be a drop-in event, with a looping presentation and stations for the separate articles, with staff and consultants manning the stations. The Land Development Code Update page is up on the city's Engagement HQ Page: www.talktyb.org.

Communications and Outreach Update

Grant Process Under Way

The Nonprofit Grant Evaluation Committee will meet this Wednesday to review and score the 13 applications that were submitted as part of this year's process. Councilwoman Williams and Councilman Parks will both serve on the scoring committee.

This year's grant application sought to fund programs and events that specifically addressed the following:

- Beautification
- Sustainability
- Community events that bring residents together
- Historic Preservation
- Increase off-season visitation

The Committee will make recommendations to Council for award. Council will hear directly from the applicants at the July 9 Workshop.

Designated Driver Campaign

Tybee's Designated Driver campaign continues to receive strong traction on our paid and earned social media channels. We will run it very heavy this week in the run-up to the July 4 holiday.

Attached is a week-by-week overview of the campaign.

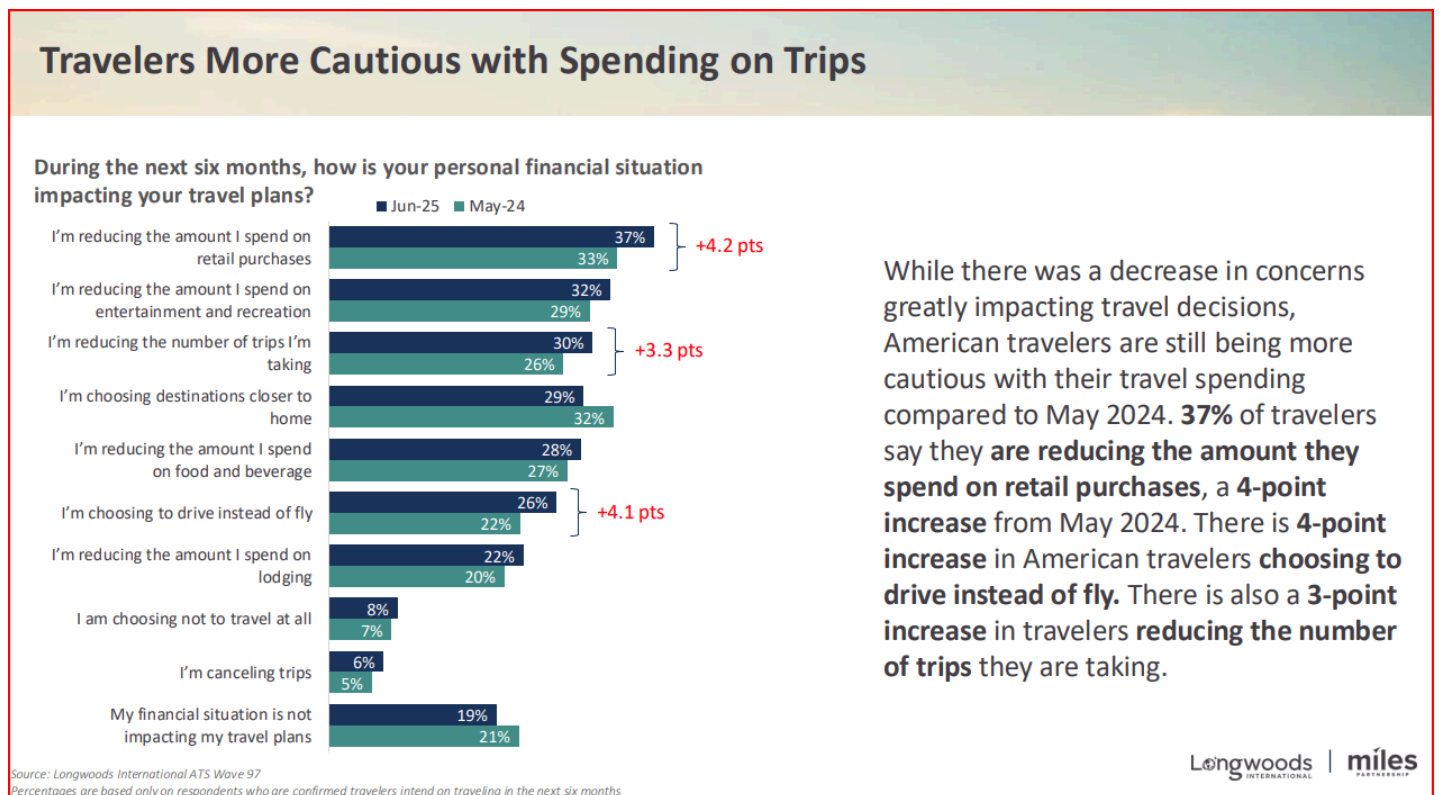
Travel Trends from Visit Tybee

Visit Savannah/Visit Tybee CEO Joe Marinelli sent out the below message, and attached report, this week on travel trends and visitor spending, which is down in Savannah/Chatham and nationwide. He also included tactics the organization is taking in this environment. It's an interesting read:

I have talked to several of you over the past few days and weeks about current travel trends impacting Savannah/Chatham County. Each conversation about "how's business?" brings a slightly different answer. Some are up, some are down. Visitor traffic and spending vary in the lodging sector, air service, retail, and food & beverage. Through May, we know that Savannah/Chatham County-area hotel occupancies are down YOY 4.9%, but that is countered by a 3.2% increase in new supply in the market (the highest in our competitive set), and demand growth (rooms sold) is down YOY less than 2%.

Additionally, given the chart below and the data in the attachment, visitor spending nationwide is down for many reasons.

I've attached the most current American Travel Sentiment from our tourism research partners at Longwoods International and Miles Partnership. I've specifically pulled the slide below to offer some additional insights into those concerns that are impacting travel buying decisions:



Our team at Visit Savannah is tracking all of the data available to us, whether it's what's happening locally or national trends, and we are not standing pat. Here are just some strategies that we have in place to do all that we can to help boost summer/fall traffic to Savannah and Tybee Island:

- *Our sales team has reviewed all "lost biz" opportunities since the beginning of the year and is calling customers back to see if we can still capture their business.*
- *Our "always-on" digital marketing efforts (display, paid social, connected TV and online video targeting) focus on potential drive and non-stop fly market future travelers.*
- *Our summer publication placements include Travel + Leisure, Southern Living, Garden & Gun, Conde Nast Traveler, Architecture Digest, Town & Country, and Parents Magazine, to name just a few.*
- *A recently launched social media campaign in partnership with popular Savannah Bananas player Jackson Olson, targeting potential summer/family travelers.*
- *An aggressive summer campaign in partnership with the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, Expedia, Hopper, and Adara.*
- *To date, our key performance indicators show:*
 - *Ad impressions up 73% YOY*
 - *Ad clicks up 101% YOY*
 - *Click-Through Rate up 16% YOY*
 - *Conversions up 123% YOY*

Without placing blame or making excuses, the lack of the National Beta Club convention this year (as compared to June 2024), coupled with extremely hot temperatures, multiple rainy weekends, inflation, and national and international geopolitics, is certainly

impacting travel to our region. However, many of our competitive set markets, including Charleston, Nashville, Atlanta, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine, also show YOY occupancy declines.

Yes, like the rest of the country, our market faces all the same challenging headwinds, but we do not see this as catastrophic, and at Visit Savannah, we continue to have our pedal to the metal.

The Week in Infrastructure

DPW

- Collected beach trash seven days
- Arranged cones, display boards and signs for work done on the U.S. 80 median
- Water new median plants
- Completed maintenance on the ditches
- Worked on replacing the stop signs across the Island
- Closed down 2nd Street Crossover and rolled back the Mobi mats
- Spread rock in front of North Beach Bar and Grill
- Completed motor grading
- Deep cleaned equipment inside of the shop
- Completed crossover repair and maintenance
- Completed pot-hole repairs across the island
- Used the street sweeper to clear the roads of debris
- Washed out the foot showers at the beach
- Hung up American flags around the island
- Installed an information sign at the Marine Science Center
- Responded to multiple work orders
- Oversaw the delivery and installation of the new shell substrate at the Marine Science Center
- Completed work on the A/Cs at the Guard House and the server room at the Police Department
- Replaced solar panel at the 7th Street pedestrian crosswalk
- Performed trash runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Mowed and trimmed Jaycee Park and Memorial Park
- Cleaned and maintained all public facilities
- Cleaned and maintained all public restrooms
- Blew debris from parks and down Tybrisa
- Picked up loose litter from parking lots, sidewalks and surrounding areas
- Issued two tree removal permits and completed five tree assessments.

Fleet

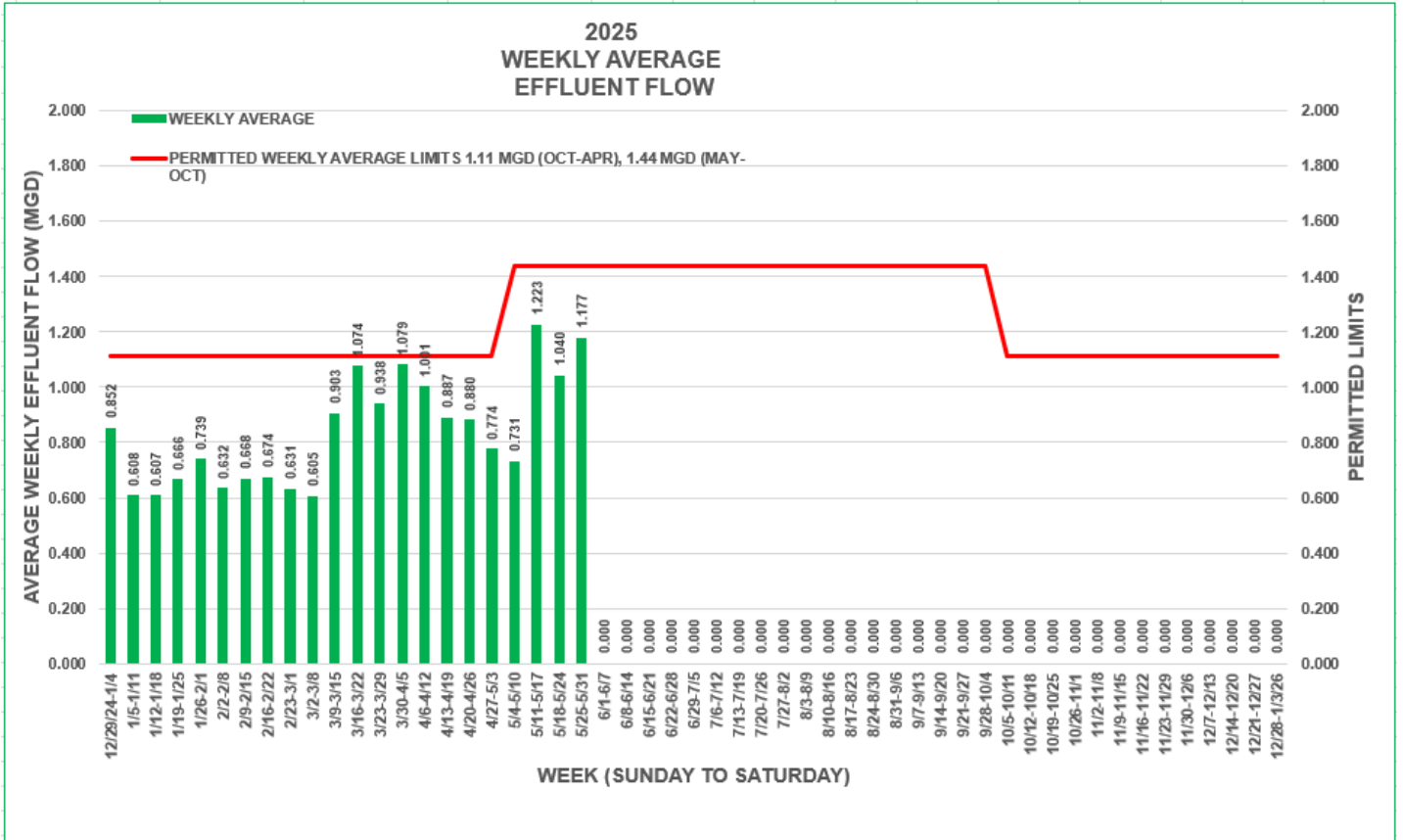
- Continued repair efforts to vehicle # 412 for Water and Sewer
- Replaced the battery in the mobile visitors center
- Replaced the hydraulic line on vehicle # 265
- Replaced the crank handle on one of the green recycle trailers for Recycling
- Removed and sent two hydraulic cylinders from vehicle # 204 for repair
- Topped off the hydraulic fluid in vehicle # 204
- Replaced the Thermal Expansion Valve and ordered a new A/C compressor for vehicle # 271
- Replaced A/C Compressor on vehicle # 271
- Aided in operating the sweeper to clear debris from the roadways.

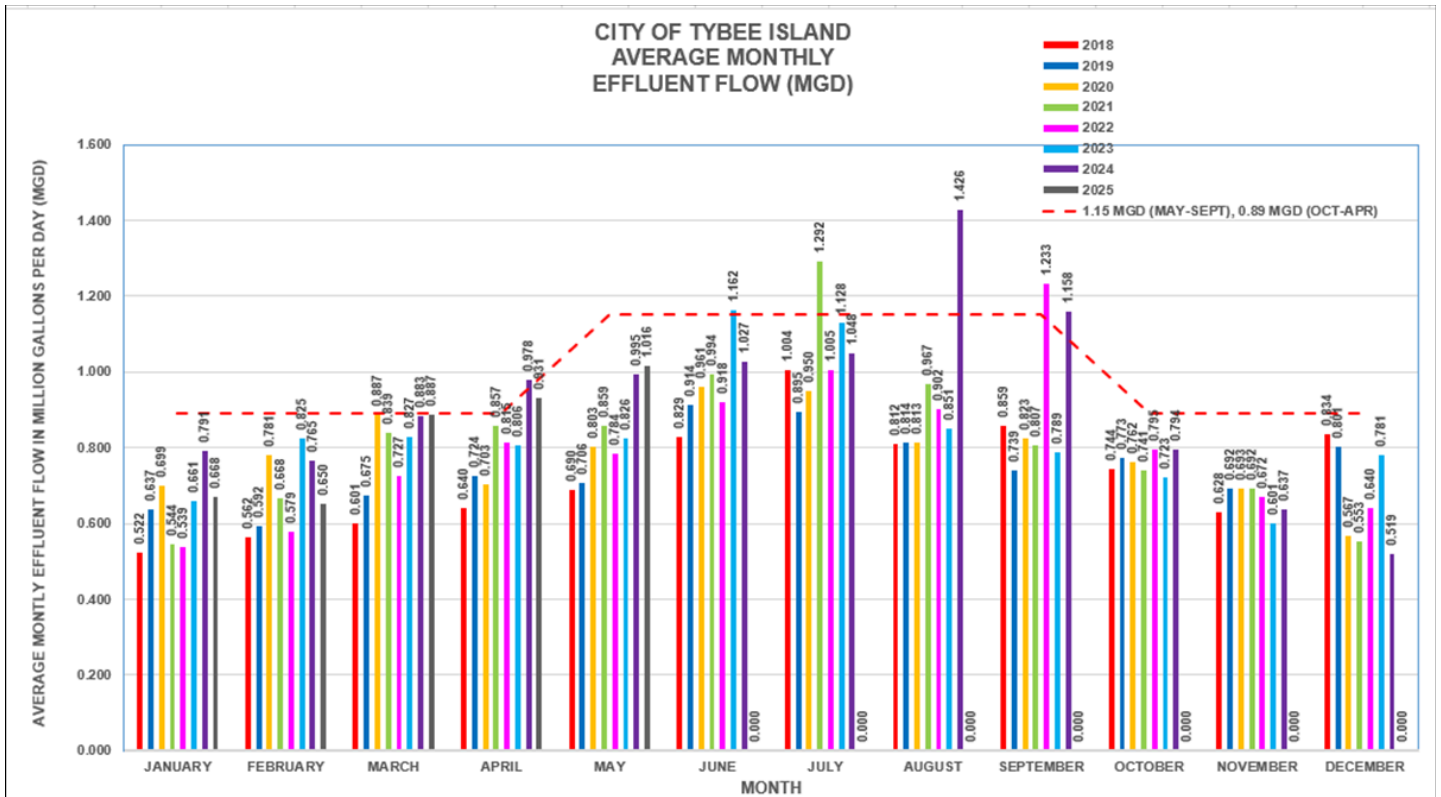
Recycling/Dump

- Picked up and emptied both cardboard trailers and both green recycle trailers
- Supervised two community service workers
- Completed three bales of cardboard
- Sorted cardboard coming into the yard from local businesses

- Called in containers with household trash, construction debris, yard waste and recycling
 - Assisted residents in unloading trash and recyclables
 - Monitored the scale
 - Cleaned up and blew leaves from the main yard
 - Trained new employee on daily tasks, heavy machinery and equipment use
- Water and Sewer

- Work began to upgrade pressure gauges on the elevated tanks.
- Staff is taking an advanced drinking water class
- Damaged water meter boxes replaced
- Water meter antennas installed
- Worked on the continuous water leak list
- Completed the annual water and sewer inventory task
- Gave EPD access to our main well for sampling requirements





The Week with Police

Accidents:

This Week: 4 accidents, 0 injuries
 2025 YTD: 50 accidents, 3 injuries
 2024 YTD: 57 accidents, 14 injuries
 2024 TOTAL: 104 accidents, 18 injuries

Arrests:

This Week: 10 total – 6 DUIs / 0 Felony
 2025 YTD: 216 arrests
 2024 YTD: 311 arrests
 2024 TOTAL: 504 arrests

Calls For Service:

This week: 344
 2025 YTD: 7,683
 2024 YTD: 8,064
 2024 TOTAL: 14,588

Citations:

This week: 53
 YTD: 792
 2024 YTD: 1,234
 2024 TOTAL: 1,792

Part 1 Crimes									
	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Arson	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total Part 1
2025	1	0	0	1	2	18	0	0	22
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

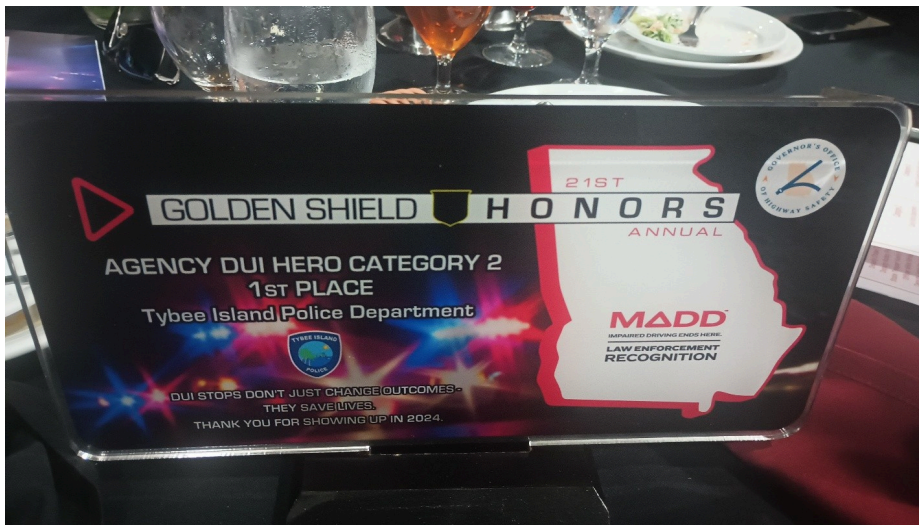
Daily Information:

06/21: The suspect from the trailer and tag theft was identified. Team TIPD worked closely with Beaufort County SO to identify the suspect. Felony warrants were issued for the suspect. The trailer was also recovered and returned to the owner.

06/26: Officers attend the annual MADD awards in Macon, Georgia. Team TIPD took home the DUI Agency Hero of the Year Award with 255 DUIs in 2024. Several officers received certificates and pins. Please see the list below:

Bensman 39
Clever 1
Cornett 5
Crider 9
Dicus 1
Goatley 41
Huber 28
Jung 3
Kareem 10
Kendrick 5
Lawlor 40 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR NOMINEE
Santiago 8
Shannon 5
Sims 60, 55 Evals OFFICER OF THE YEAR AND GOLDEN SHIELD AWARD NOMINEE
Stuber 3
Westcott 2





06/27: TIPD officers and Cadets spent three days on the range for annual qualifications, some days with a heat index over 100 and one day in the classroom.

Officers continue to work the Back River Beach area during the weekends.

Staffing:

We are down a total of four budgeted officers (one leaving July 7 for the Georgia Ports Authority Police Department). We now have three cadets who recently started with the police department. All have been accepted into the police academy beginning July 7. The police department currently has one open Police Officer position. We are in the process of background and interview procedures for a sworn officer. Her interview was June 27.

Communications is down two positions. The openings are due to the communications officer transitioning to a Police Cadet and one leaving to use his doctoral degree. We currently have two applications in to fill these positions. One is a certified communications officer and one is not. Due to the short staff and busy season, former communications officer Sara Benton will return as a seasonal employee to help fill in during busy times while we conduct interviews and background checks on the two applicants.

Upcoming Events:

Next week, Capt. Randolph and Rocky will be traveling to Columbus, Georgia, for the Georgia Police K9 Foundation's "An Evening for the K9s" fundraiser. They will be one of 40 teams from across the country that attendees can meet. Their lodging will be covered by the K9 Foundation. They've also supported TIPD in the past through the donations of treats and equipment for our dogs.

07/04: July 4th Fireworks. All officers are working on this date for paid overtime. Three officers will be coming in early to handle the Bike Parade.

07/09: Over the last month, OFC Crider, OFC Lawlor, Detective Coreno, CPL Jung, and OFC Kareem have taken part in several presentations at the Fresh Air Home. The kids that attend the Fresh Air Home are mostly of lower income families from our area. Some of these kids arrive at camp with no clothes, no shoes, and no toothbrush. Two weeks of camp is an opportunity for some of these parents to drop off their children and be childless. The majority of the kids in attendance have had negative experiences with law enforcement. This is the Police Department's opportunity to show them that law enforcement can be trusted.

Below are several messages that Police have received directly from representatives of the Fresh Air Home:

"Thank you for having both the fire and police departments and talking to the campers of how important these services are to our communities. The campers loved this opportunity and we are always so grateful for your generous donation of your time and talents. Our campers have certainly enjoyed their camp time, thanks, in part, to your support."

"First of all...., the campers were so thrilled to meet the police and firemen, along with the opportunity to sit in the police car and fire truck. I believe you could have stayed all day answering questions. Please extend our appreciation to all present that made our day."

"If I said it once, I said it a thousand times Thank you for going above and beyond today. You all were so patient and kind to all the children. I know this day will go down in history as being such a fun learning experience. I've attached a few pictures I had taken."

"We are looking forward to seeing the group picture taken by the drone! See you again on Wednesday, July 9th. Please share my appreciation with all those that helped with the demonstrations."

07/10: Scheduled crosswalk enforcement.

07/03, 08/28: Next dates for Golf Cart Education and Enforcement.

07/05: Please see the flyer below for the Police Emerald Society of Southeast Georgia's annual Pancake Breakfast at the Tybee Island American Legion.

The Week with Fire

Lifeguard Hiring

- 25 Lifeguards and 3 Lifeguard Dispatchers have been hired to date.
- 3 applicants are scheduled for the run/swim test on 6/14/25
- 2 new applications were received this week and sent to the Beach Manager for review

Fire Incidents

The department responded to **25 total calls for service** during the reporting period. Below is a summary of each incident, including location and type:

Date	Type of Call	Address	Status
06/27/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	1402 Butler Avenue	Closed
06/26/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1403 Butler Avenue	Closed
06/26/2025	Search for person in water	Water south of the pier	Closed
06/26/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	14 18th Street	Closed
06/26/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1608 Butler	Closed
06/25/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	26 Van Horne Avenue	Closed
06/25/2025	Assist invalid	114 Lewis	Closed
06/24/2025	Dispatched and cancelled en route	North Beach	Closed
06/24/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	1509 Strand Avenue	Closed
06/24/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	33 Meddin Drive	Closed
06/24/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1 Old US Hwy 80	Closed
06/24/2025	Welfare check, non-emergency	10 TS Chuter	Closed
06/22/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	33 Meddin	Closed
06/22/2025	Emergency medical service, other	Fisherman's Walk	Closed
06/22/2025	Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	725 1st Street	Closed
06/22/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	1513 Butler	Closed
06/21/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	1508 Butler Avenue	Closed
06/21/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	0 Tybrisa Street	Closed
06/21/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	3 10th Street	Closed
06/21/2025	Emergency medical service, other	7 Rosewood Avenue	Closed
06/21/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	112 Lewis Avenue	Closed
06/21/2025	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	Beach at Taylor Street	Closed
06/20/2025	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	511 Butler Avenue	Closed
06/19/2025	Dispatched and cancelled en route	16 Tybrisa	Closed
06/19/2025	Assist invalid	1301 Lovell	Closed

Ocean Rescue Activity – June 21–27

Tybee Island Ocean Rescue maintained strong coverage and public engagement on the beach. Stats for the week include:

- **2,658 advisements**
- **13 jellyfish stings**
- **8 water assists**
- **1 water rescue**
- **2 public transports**
- **2 missing persons** (both successfully located)
- **23 medicals**
- **2 requiring EMS transport**

Advisements remain one of the most important parts of their day-to-day operations, covering everything from public education on water safety to addressing beach rule violations

Joint Training: Fire & Ocean Rescue

This week TIFR kicked off a new initiative where Fire Department personnel are joining Ocean Rescue for morning physical training a few days each week. This effort supports a unified team mentality and builds mutual respect across the two divisions. It's already showing benefits in camaraderie and shared mission.



First Due Software Implementation

Configuration and training sessions with First Due are ongoing. One of the areas we're most excited about is working with the First Due team to ensure smooth integration with BS&A, the City's payroll system. Once that connection is finalized, it should significantly reduce the administrative workload related to firefighter payroll processing.

Vehicle Maintenance Update

We're still facing challenges with the side-by-sides used by both the Fire Department and Ocean Rescue. Currently, we have three operational units, while three remain sidelined with mechanical issues. Sgt. David Palowski and our partners at DPW are working hard to get all units back up and running. Their efforts are appreciated as we try to keep beach and emergency coverage uninterrupted.

Watering New Plants on U.S. 80

DPW reached out to Fire this week asking for help watering the newly installed plants in the U.S. 80 Median. We were glad to step up and will be taking care of this three times a week until the plants are established and we start getting regular rain again. Team Tybee!

Parking Revenue Year over Year (Through June 26) Comparison

MONTH	FY2025	FY2024	GAIN/LOSS
JULY	\$1,070,704	\$1,200,607	-\$129,903
AUG	\$679,586	\$701,020	-\$21,434
SEPT	\$447,400	\$630,213	-\$182,813
OCT	\$376,017	\$416,828	-\$40,811
NOV	\$200,387	\$210,757	-\$10,370
DEC	\$22,345	\$77,354	-\$55,009
JAN	\$152,287	\$146,744	\$5,543
FEB	\$286,795	\$238,367	\$48,428

MARCH	\$542,160	\$546,818	-\$4,659
APRIL	\$863,706	\$685,106	\$178,601
MAY	\$976,406	\$976,524	-\$119
JUNE	(thru June 26) \$992,779	\$1,165,611	-\$172,833
TOTAL	\$6,582,558	\$6,995,949	-\$413,391

Around the Campground

- 124 Arrivals, 535 Site Nights, 74% Occupancy, down 3% YoY
- 25 guests attended the Campground's Tie Dye event.
- TikTok video posted on Thursday had 3,500 views in first 24 hours.
- Completed Fiscal Year End store inventory count of 714 product for a total of 15,346 items!
- Replaced eight lead acid batteries with a single lithium ion battery in one of the golf carts. This change provides a substantial weight reduction, less maintenance, and longer lifespan.

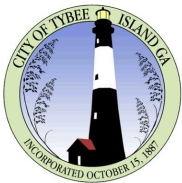
The Week at Municipal Court

Court was held June 24, 2025

Dispositions:

Bond Forfeiture	43
Bound over to State Court	4
Bound over to Superior Court	9
Dismissed	4
Guilty as Charged	12
Merged	1
Nolo Contendre	2
Nolle Prosequi	14
PTD	3
Warning	18

Have a great week everyone!



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