
City Council Weekly Update - November 17, 2025

From Bret Bell <bret.bell@cityoftybee.gov>
Date Tue 11/18/2025 12:03 AM
To #Council <#Council@cityoftybee.org>
Cc #Dept Heads <#DeptHeads@cityoftybee.org>

Greetings Mayor and Council,

We made a decision last week concerning the application for a special event permit during the weekend traditionally known as Orange Crush.

As you know, former Orange Crush co-promoters Steven Smalls and George Turner each submitted separate applications for an event on the beach April 18, 2026. We concluded that the City could not safely accommodate two events occurring simultaneously, so we established a competitive evaluation process. The two submitted revised plans on Oct. 20, and presented their plans in person to an internal City scoring team on November 3. Each team member scored the two presentations based on the following criteria:

- Quality of Presentation
- Demonstrated Capability
- Public Safety and Sanitation Preparedness
- Event Planning Understanding and Approach

Steven Smalls, who was the primary event organizer of last year's Orange Crush, scored the highest and will move forward with our event permitting process for a one-day beach event on April 18 with a similar footprint as last year's event. We will work with Smalls on improving organization and logistics over last year's event. The two promoters will be notified of the decision this week.

Tybee Wildfire Planning

As you know, we had a pretty complicated dune fire at North Beach last week. Heavy winds spread flames quickly in an area difficult to reach with hose. Excellent teamwork between Tybee Fire and Tybee Police allowed the rapid deployment of more than 2,000 feet of hose to tackle the brush fire, and stop it before we suffered significant structural damage.

In all, some fencing and part of the crossover were charred, as were some palms and lots of brush. We have received permission from the DNR to make needed repairs.

Coincidentally, we had been having discussions with the Department of Natural Resources about potentially developing a prescribed burn pilot program in limited areas on the island as a tool to enhance habitat, eliminate invasive species and encourage the growth of native grasses while mimicking natural fire patterns and reducing the potential for larger wildfires.

Last week's North Beach wildfire presents us with an unexpected opportunity to monitor and document the burn area to evaluate its impact on this important ecosystem. The DNR has set up a meeting with representatives from the Jekyll Island Authority later this week to discuss its Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which is considered a model for barrier islands. A copy of the plan can be found here: https://www.jekyllisland.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CWPP_2023.c.pdf.

We have not concluded whether a limited prescribed burn program is right for Tybee Island, but last week's wildfire presents a unique opportunity to evaluate potential impacts.



Some charred vegetation from last week's North Beach fire.

Tybee Wonderland

DPW Elves were busy today, and the island is starting to look a lot like Christmas!





A reminder about key Holiday event dates:

- Saturday, November 29** - Small Business Saturday
- Monday, December 1 at 6 p.m.** - Christmas Tree Lighting
- Friday, December 12 at 6:30 p.m.** - Christmas Parade of Lights
- Saturday, December 13 at 11 a.m.** - Tybee Island Holiday Market
- Wednesday, December 31 at Midnight** - New Year's Eve Fireworks
- Thursday, January 1, 2026** - Tybee Island Polar Plunge

The Week with Police

Accidents Last Week

This Week: 2 accidents, 0 injuries
2025 YTD: 97 accidents, 16 injuries
2024 YTD: 98 accidents, 18 injuries
2024 TOTAL: 104 accidents, 18 injuries

Arrests

This Week: 6 total – 1 Felony
2025 YTD: 390 arrests
2024 YTD: 470 arrests
2024 TOTAL: 504 arrests

DUIs

This Week: 3
2025 YTD: 245
2024 YTD: 221
2024 TOTAL: 241

Calls For Service

This Week: 284
2025 YTD: 20,585
2024 YTD: 20,800
2024 TOTAL: 23,258

Citations

This Week: 30
 YTD: 1,398
 2024 YTD: 1,689
 2024 TOTAL: 1,792

Part 1 Crimes									
	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Arson	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total Part 1
2025	1	0	0	3	1	29	0	0	34
2024	0	3	0	9	3	51	0	0	66
2023	0	0	1	5	2	44	0	0	52
2022	0	0	0	2	1	24	1	1	29

Staffing

The Police Department is currently down one officer position.

Daily Information

11/10: Meeting with Motorola Solutions in reference to placing the antenna for our first responder radios on top of the water tower. The cost for this much-needed project is \$19,300.

11/12: Drone operator took aerial footage of the fire on Gulick Street.

11/13: Police officer open interview for one open position.

11/13: Sergeant Board interviews for one open Sergeant position.

11/14: Meeting with TIMA headmaster and principal.

Upcoming Events

11/21: ****PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF LOCATION AND TIME**** Police Academy graduation for our three cadets. Held at 11 a.m. at the Otis S. Johnson Cultural Arts Center at Oglethorpe Avenue and Montgomery Street. After graduation, we will take the officers and their families to lunch at Carey Hilliard's on Skidaway, approximately 12:45 p.m.

11/22-30: During the Thanksgiving break for TIMA, TIPD officers and potentially outside agencies will conduct training on the campus.

12/11: Lt. Chris White graduates from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va.

12/18: Assistant Chief Whitley will attend a three-hour session at the Georgia Ports Authority with the GBI on Officer-Involved Shootings. This course is designed for law enforcement leaders and command staff.

The Week with Fire

Tybee Island Fire Department Weekly Report November 7–13, 2025:

Date	Time	Incident Code & Type	Address
11/7/2025	15:29	735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	204 5TH ST
11/7/2025	16:33	653 - Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	15th St
11/7/2025	22:43	321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	5 CENTER PL
11/8/2025	11:05	554 - Assist invalid	3 10TH COURT
11/8/2025	11:15	320 - Emergency medical service incident, other	215 LOVELL AVE
11/9/2025	22:30	700 - False alarm or false call, other	1402 BUTLER AVE
11/10/2025	08:29	321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	7 ROSEWOOD AVE
11/10/2025	15:18	311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	77 VAN HORNE AVE
11/10/2025	16:59	700 - False alarm or false call, other	1508 BUTLER AVE
11/11/2025	15:45	321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	77 VAN HORNE AVE
11/11/2025	16:33	611 - Dispatched & canceled en route	7 ROSEWOOD AVE
11/11/2025	17:44	445 - Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	25 OFFICERS ROW
11/12/2025	15:08	142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	BEACH
11/13/2025	10:43	651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	BEACH

Points of interest

- Dunes Fire:** As everyone saw, we did have a dunes grass fire this week. The initial call came out as a trash can on fire but we were unable to find said trash can throughout the event. What was on fire when crews arrived within minutes was a large area of dunes grass and brush in the corner by the entrance to the Gulick Street crossover. Engine 1 began attack operations in this corner while

Truck 1 established a supply line to the hydrant. Winds were aggressively blowing northeast and the fire quickly spread through the dune area toward North Beach crossover. Fires of this nature really stretch our limited crews thin. Truck 1 repositioned to the North Beach crossover and deployed another attack line with supply hose to the truck. In all, Tybee Fire put at least 2,000 feet of hose on the ground. Tybee Police was instrumental in helping deploy hose. The fire was successfully contained to the dune area between Gulick and North Beach with very minimal damage to the fence by Gulick and a couple of posts on the crossover. Outstanding work by Tybee Fire and PD once again!



2. **Hydrant Testing:** Crews continued hydrant testing this week. The Department is gathering pressure data for our software as well as color coding the caps with paint for quick visual verification of available pressure. Fire is also replacing missing street reflectors that indicate a hydrant's location in the dark.
3. **Annual Hose Testing:** After hydrant maintenance, Fire will begin yearly hose testing necessary for ISO. This is a process involving filling the hoses and pressurizing them for a period of time to verify they are in good working order.
4. **Occupancy Load Inspections:** Chief McMillian continued occupancy load inspections for business license renewals in the city. These are the certificates posted near the exits indicating a safe number of occupants at any given time. Businesses have been very receptive to this process. I'm about to get very busy with it as we have 284 business licenses and only 25 have renewed so far with a deadline coming up in November! Reminder that businesses needing to renew should contact city hall and occupancy load requests can be sent to "occupancy@cityoftybee.gov."
5. **Grant Award:** Fantastic news this week out of Rep. Buddy Carter's office that \$5 million in federal funding for the construction of the new Tybee Island Fire Department was secured.
6. **Ocean Rescue End of Season Statistics:** Below are year-end Ocean Rescue stats, and comparisons with previous years. Please note the significant increase in advisements, which reflects direct interactions between lifeguards and the public. This is a direct result of the Fire Department re-dedicating itself to the business of Ocean Rescue and the fine leadership of our Beach Manager Jen Bishop. According to the National Weather Service, we had 162 days with rip currents reported this year compared with 87 days in 2024. The ocean was angry this year my friends. It is a testament to our Ocean Resuce team that we had 0 drownings this season.

TYBEE ISLAND OCEAN RESCUE			
YEARLY COMPARISON REPORT			
	2023	2024	2025
Advisements	10,774	34,717	44,743
Jellyfish Stings			521
Water Assists	43	43	106
Water Rescues	42	28	38
Animal Assists			16
Public Transports			38
Missing Persons	47	25	40
Medicals			270
Medicals With EMS	38	22	21
Jet Ski Assists			3
Fatal Drownings	0	2	0

Communications and Outreach

Mass Notification System

Staff attended the kickoff meeting for the implementation of the City's new Mass Notification System (Civic Ready) through CivicPlus. This upgraded platform will enhance how public safety officials and City administration communicate with residents and visitors, providing timely, targeted updates on the topics they choose to receive. While the City currently uses CivicSend—also a CivicPlus product—its capabilities are limited compared to CivicReady, especially when it comes to delivering critical public safety alerts. This new system will significantly improve the City's ability to share important information quickly and effectively.

Holiday Plans

Staff presented an overview of the City's upcoming holiday events at the recent City Council meeting, including City-sponsored festivities, seasonal décor plans, and the potential for an exciting new addition to this year's holiday lineup. We extend our sincere thanks to the Department of Public Works for their hard work and dedication in installing the City's holiday decorations—a key element in helping make Tybee Island a premier destination for the season.

Website Updates

- Staff Directory
- City Manager
- News Flashes
- Bid Section
- Finance
- Calendar
- Engagement HQ Site

Social Media & Digital Engagement

Page Insights

- Views: 108,800
- Total followers: 31,720

Top Facebook Posts This Week

 <p>Welcoming Rachel Combs as Tybee... Wed Nov 12, 7:01am 35.3K views, 301 likes, 58 comments, 11 shares</p>	 <p>These three artist dropped by City Hall... Tue Nov 11, 8:39am 12.9K views, 235 likes, 12 comments, 9 shares</p>	 <p>Celebrating Kim Fickes' Retirement... Thu Nov 13, 11:00am 6.9K views, 86 likes, 7 comments, 3 shares</p>	 <p>Employee of the Quarter: Whitney... Wed Nov 12, 11:00am 6.3K views, 259 likes, 67 comments, 9 shares</p>	 <p>Why Inflow & Infiltration (I&I)... Mon Nov 10, 7:00am 4K views, 15 likes, 1 comment, 6 shares</p>
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WSAV

<https://www.wsav.com/crime-safety/officials-responding-to-fire-on-tybees-north-beach/>

<https://www.wsav.com/community/community-corner/community-corner-tybee-ballet-theatre-presents-original-production-land-of-the-sweets/>

WTOC

<https://www.wtoc.com/2025/11/12/dune-fire-tybee-island/>

WJCL

<https://www.wjcl.com/article/tybee-island-dunes-fire/69414677>

Savannah Morning News

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/local/2025/11/17/looking-to-fund-stormwater-improvements-tybee-looks-to-tax-again/8727250007/>

<https://www.savannahnow.com/videos/news/fire/2025/11/12/wednesday-afternoon-fire-on-tybee-islands-north-beach-cause-unknown/87238525007/>

Fox 5 Atlanta

<https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/fire-burns-five-acres-beach-tybee-island>

Special Events

Number of events this week November 9 – November 15:

Special Events: 1

Special Event Vendor Permits: 38

Beach: 5

Film: 1

Guard House: 4

Memorial Park Screened Pavilion: 6

Memorial Park Open Air Pavilion: 1

Community Cafeteria: 5

Community Classroom: 6

Event Banner Permits: 5

Number of events YTD as of November 14:

Special Events: 21

Special Event Vendor Permits: 120

Beach: 183

Film: 26

Guard House: 90

Memorial Park Screened Pavilion: 75

Memorial Park Open Air Pavilion: 84

Jaycee Park Gazebo: 5

Community Cafeteria: 208

Community Classroom: 206

Event Banner Permits: 71

New Special Event Application Submission on Website: 39 submissions

Reservation Website: 714 transactions with a transaction total of \$26,547.85

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

- **CLG Grant Project:** The project continues to make steady progress with consistent communication to ensure deadlines are met.
- Planning is underway for the 2026 Tour of Homes and a Preservation in the Park event in Jaycee Park.

Main Street Program

Beachcomber Article: Maggie Wright wrote the Main Street article for the December edition of the Tybee Beachcomber. The piece highlights upcoming holiday events, provides updates on current Main Street projects, and shares other news of interest for residents and visitors alike.

Small Business Saturday: We are preparing a Small Business Bingo promotion in celebration of Small Business Saturday. We applied for the American Express Neighborhood Champions Program and were accepted, and the promotional materials for the campaign have arrived. The bingo activity was created to help drive shoppers across the island and encourage local spending throughout the holiday season. Maggie will be stationed at the Visitor Center with the Mobile Visitor Center for bingo card pick-up and drop-off. Businesses interested in participating can still sign up using the provided form.

Tybee for the Holidays:

- Preparations are well underway for the upcoming holiday season.
- **Ornament Program:** The ornament decorating program has been a big success. Sand Cat sold out of ornaments at both locations. Participants were asked to return their decorated ornaments by 4 p.m. on Friday, November 14. The ornaments look wonderful and are going to add so much to the holiday spirit.
- **Tree Lighting Ceremony:** The stage has been reserved, an MC has been booked, and two performances have been confirmed. We have also secured Tybean to provide hot chocolate, cider, and coffee for attendees. The letter of permission from DNR has been approved, and the event billboard is live.
- **Christmas Parade of Lights:** The parade application has been posted and is receiving submissions. Advertising is ongoing, and the billboard is active. Two parade judges have been confirmed.
- **Holiday Market:** The Holiday Market continues to come together, with vendors reviewed and approved. This year's market is expected to feature between sixty and seventy vendors, making it the largest Holiday Market to date. The kids' train has been booked, and seven entertainment slots are confirmed. We are coordinating the Pet Parade and Costume Contest, benefiting OneLove Animal Rescue. Judges for the contest have been confirmed.
- Ornaments featuring artwork from the Tybrisa Street mural have been ordered as a Main Street fundraiser.
- **Polar Plunge:** Planning for the Polar Plunge is progressing as well. We are finalizing details with the t-shirt company, and shirts will be posted for presale as soon as they are ready.

Public Works Weekly

DPW

- Cleaned out the outfalls at Inlet and Alley 3.
- Assisted the Marine Science Center in moving a large pole to the top of their stairs.
- Formed up for concrete at the Marine Science Center.
- Removed pavers from around the trees on both sides of Butler Avenue to prepare for turf installation.
- Organizing the shop areas for better accessibility of supplies
- Picked up litter along the beach Monday through Friday.
- Operated the street sweeper Monday and Friday islandwide.
- Stripped and waxed the floors at the Guardhouse.
- Installed Christmas lights on the palm trees down Tybrisa and the welcome sign.
- Removed flags around the island after Veteran's Day.
- Performed trash runs on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- Picked up loose litter from parking lots, sidewalks, and surrounding areas.
- Cleaned and maintained all public facilities.
- Cleaned and maintained all public restrooms.
- Blew debris and leaves off Memorial Park, Jaycee Park, and down Tybrisa for the sweeper to collect.
- Trimmed palms trees island wide.
- Trimmed the beach crossovers on the north and south ends of the island.
- Performed four tree assessments and issued three tree removal permits.

Fleet

- Performed preventative maintenance on two Wen generators.
- Added power steering fluid to vehicle #204 and ensured it was working properly.
- Replaced the gear shifter bracket for vehicle #242.
- Contacted Robert's Truck Center to review the repairs and quotes for Water and Sewer's dump truck.
- Performed preventative maintenance on the Police Department's Chevy.
- Drained the fuel and cleaned the carburetors on the Wen generators.
- Provided the Fire Department with two cases of DEF.
- Added main seal leak stop fluid to vehicle #212.

Recycling/Dump

- Picked up and emptied both cardboard trailers and both green recycle trailers.

- Picked up aluminum and oyster shell recyclables from local businesses.
- Completed two bales of cardboard.
- Supervised two community service workers.
- Picked up street recycling from Tybrisa and the beach crossovers.
- Sorted incoming cardboard from local businesses.
- Called in containers with household trash, construction debris, yard waste, and recycling.
- Assisted residents in unloading trash and recyclables.
- Installed new Recycle area signs to replace the damaged ones.
- Monitored the scale and charged nonresidential customers and contractors.
- Cleaned up litter and loose recycling from off the main yard.

Water and Sewer Weekly

- Maintained plant operations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Conducted weekly wastewater analyses testing for Treatment Plant
- Worked with vendor at plant to continue SCADA upgrade on several process components.
- Preparing for inspection of Lift Station 6 to troubleshoot problems that we are experiencing there. This is a critical lift station in our system.
- Ran tests on newly installed Wastewater Treatment Plant generator.
- Located a sewer lateral break on 2nd Avenue.
- Completed several 811 locates.
- Repaired a water leak at 2nd avenue and U.S. 80.
- Final inspection on new maintenance building performed. Staff starting to set it up for use.
- Repaired a water leak at the Campground.
- Televised a storm line for DPW stormwater crew.
- Cleaned out work trucks.
- Met with contractors and homeowners about moving and raising boxes and meters.
- Changed out dead batteries, meter lids, and antennas.
- Weekly inspection of beach foot showers performed.
- Maintained operations at the water wells and lift stations.

The Week with Code Compliance

Between Nov. 10 and Nov. 16, the Tybee Island Code Compliance Department issued:

Citations: 5

- Dog on Beach: 3
- Dog at Large: 1
- Smoking on Beach: 1

Warnings: 5

- Dog at Large (Written): 2
- Glass on Beach (Verbal): 1
- Dog on Beach (Verbal): 1
- RV Dwelling Without Permit (NOV): 1

Activity Summary

- Calls for Service: 31
- Beach Patrols: 13
- Sandbar Patrols: 4
- Citizen Encounters: 665
- Wheelchair Checkouts: 5
- Golf Cart Inspections: 5

Parking Compliance

EXPIRED TIME: 6
 NO PAYMENTS: 132
 NO READABLE RECIEPT: 4
 PROHIBITED ZONE: 10
 CITIZEN CONTACTS: 401

Note that half-price off-season parking rates were implemented Nov. 1.

Parking Revenue Year to Date			
MONTH	FY2026	FY2025	GAIN/(LOSS)
JULY	\$1,135,293	\$1,070,704	\$64,589
AUG	\$578,597	\$679,586	(\$100,989)
SEPT	\$518,649	\$447,400	\$71,249
OCT	\$332,050	\$376,017	(\$43,967)
NOV	\$64,958 (to date)	\$200,387	
DEC	\$0	\$22,345	
JAN	\$0	\$152,287	
FEB	\$0	\$258,783	
MARCH	\$0	\$542,159	
APRIL	\$0	\$863,706	
MAY	\$0	\$976,406	
JUNE	\$0	\$1,182,473	
TOTALS	\$2,629,547	\$6,772,253	(\$9,118) (thru Oct.)

Around the Campground

- 72 Arrivals, 419 Site Nights, 58% Occupancy, Up 10% YoY.
- Repaired water leak in front of Site 61 with assistance from Water and Sewer.
- Repaired screen door on Cabin 103.
- Updated landscaping on sites 140a and 92.
- The Campground received the *Plan-It Green Environmental Innovator of the Year* award (Small/Medium Category) from the Outdoor Hospitality Institute's Awards of Excellence program, which honors innovation and leadership in outdoor hospitality. These awards highlight outstanding achievements across park operations, environmental sustainability, education, supplier innovation, advocacy, and leadership, celebrating the individuals and organizations driving the industry forward, according to a press release.

Have a great week everyone!



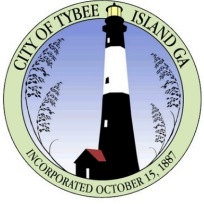
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