

City Council Weekly Update - December 28, 2025

From Bret Bell <bret.bell@cityoftybee.gov>
Date Sun 12/28/2025 10:58 PM
To #Council <#Council@cityoftybee.org>
Cc #Dept Heads <#DeptHeads@cityoftybee.org>

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Hoping everyone had a joyous Christmas! Perfect weather in the 70s on the last long weekend of the year sure felt like a gift wrapped in a bow for Tybee. Lots of guests on the island spending money, taking advantage of free holiday parking, and taking selfies in beachwear in front of our festive holiday decorations.

Scenes from Saturday: Active beach and full parking lots.



If you see me walking gingerly this week, it's evidence that I spent this lovely Saturday with some buddies completing our annual ruck march from Ardsley Park to the Historic District to the southern tip of Tybee Island — a 23-mile journey that ended with a dunk in the Atlantic. Happy to report that Tybee Road/McQueen's Island Trail was one of the cleanest stretches of the

route, thanks in large part (if I had to bet) to the Ploughe Patrol. The Bull River Bridge, however, is carrying an alarming amount of car/mechanical debris, which I will report to GDOT on Monday.

Thankful that the State plans to include separated bike/pedestrian lanes in the Bull River/Lazaretto Creek bridge replacements scheduled for late 2027. The current bridges are harrowing for pedestrians and cyclists:



North End Sanitary Sewer Project

As you know, our contractor began work at the beginning of this month on the North End Sanitary Sewer Project, which is focused on replacing aged and failing sewer lines, some of which cross private property, in the Fort Screven area. Council approved the \$1.75 million contract to Vertical Earth Inc. in October.

Work is progressing on-schedule, and is currently focused on Pearwood and Dogwood. The contractor filled in trenches before taking the second half of last week off due to the holidays.

While this project is extremely disruptive to neighboring residents, I have received relatively few complaints thus far. City Engineer Pete Gulbranson has done a great job problem-solving issues that arise between the contractor and neighbors, and keeping them informed through meetings and through weekly email project updates.

I will include this information in my City Council Weekly Updates, including last week's project update lower down in this email.



Construction activity at the start of the project at Van Horn and Taylor.

Water Tower Painting

As you've noticed, our contractor has begun the process of repainting the water tower above the Public Safety Building. This is the second time the contractor has painted the water tower. The project originally began in 2022, and encountered a number of delays, both due to changes in design and due to substandard subcontractor work.

A recent inspection found problems with the paint job they had finished earlier this year, which resulted in correspondence between City Attorney Hughes and legal counsel for the contractor. This resulted in the contractor agreeing to re-sandblast and re-paint the tower in an expedited manner at no additional charge to the City. Re-mobilization occurred a few weeks ago, and the job is expected to be complete by the end of January. The very visible pink curtain is to contain the sandblasting.



We have received some complaints about sandblasting work occurring late into the evening. We have told the contractor this is unacceptable and against City ordinance, and we will take action if it continues.

This has obviously been a frustrating project. Our goal is to ensure that the work is done right and finished as quickly as possible. Once complete, we will work with the City Attorney to determine next steps.

Solomon Park

Our team met on-site with our landscape design partners at Thomas and Hutton on Dec. 19 to review first draft of conceptual plans for the proposed Solomon Avenue Park, located on our property at the intersection of Polk and Solomon.



The early concept developed by Thomas and Hutton includes a marsh scenic overlook, trail development, picnic tables, benches, and installation of pollinator gardens and landscaping utilizing native grasses. The plan has a lot that we liked. But it was developed prior to the team being able to gain full access to the property due to thick undergrowth. Since that initial meeting, our DPW crew has done a great job opening the property up, and we see a lot more potential.

We will work over the next month revising the plan, with the goal of presenting concepts for feedback to Council in workshop in February, which would be followed by a public open house.

We plan to issue an RFP in January for remediation of the impacted soils at Park and Solomon.

Jaycee Park Canal Improvements

We had an on-site meeting two weeks ago with our consulting team and representatives from the Tybee Island Disc Golf Club to review improvements planned for Jaycee Park in the first quarter of 2026.

As you will recall, the project includes dredging 1-2 feet of sediment from the bottom of the canal, repairing its banks, and replanting native vegetation to improve aesthetics and marsh growth, and manage sediment erosion. Total project cost is estimated at up to \$300,000, with \$100,000 of that cost funded through a grant.

The Jaycee Park Disc Golf Course is very popular, and largely follows the length of the drainage canal. We all had a productive walk-through, where we discussed vegetative and bench placement that did not negatively impact course play. I think we all agreed the planned improvements will likely improve the overall aesthetics and playability of the course.



Hiring of City Custodian

I'm please to announce that we have hired a City Custodian, Jeffrey Burton.

In recent years the City has contracted with a few different vendors to provide custodial services at City facilities. This was expensive, and at times resulted in substandard service. Some of our buildings more often than not looked dirty.

We did the math and determined bringing the position in-house would save money. It also brings all of our facilities, including our jail cells, under the care of one full-time individual reporting to DPW. This should result in quicker service, more flexibility, and greater accountability. We also feel better from a security standpoint.

Mr. Burton, who lives on Tybee, has hit the ground running, and has been approaching his position with great enthusiasm. We are all excited about the positive impact we are already seeing after just a week on the job. Our public buildings should be something our citizens take pride in.



January Calendar of Events

January is shaping up to be a busy month. Clerk of Council Mann sent a helpful recap last week. Sharing it again here:

Friday, January 2 | 10:00 AM

- Swearing-In Ceremony (w/ Fabian)
- Council Chambers
- Charter-required oath of office administered

Wednesday, January 7 | 11:30 AM

- Economic Outlook Luncheon
- Savannah Convention Center

Thursday, January 8 | 6:30 PM

- City Council Meeting
- Council Chambers

Wednesday, January 14 | Depart City Hall at 8:00 AM

- City Council Workshop (Offsite)
- Jekyll Island Authority Offices
- Muhly grass restoration presentation & tour

Wednesday, January 21 | 1:00 PM

- City Council Workshop (Offsite)
- Tybee Post Theater
- Goal-setting session

Thursday, January 22 — Monday, January 26

- Cities United Summit
- Omni Atlanta Hotel

Thursday, January 29 | 7:00 PM

- Ceremonial Inauguration (w/ Judge Scheer) & State of the City Program
- Tybee Post Theater | Reception to follow at Beachview Inn

The Week with Police

Accidents Last Week

This Week: 2 accidents, 0 injuries

2025 YTD: 105 accidents, 17 injuries

2024 YTD: 102 accidents, 18 injuries

2024 TOTAL: 104 accidents, 18 injuries

Arrests

This Week: 1 total

2025 YTD: 405 arrests

2024 YTD: 493 arrests

2024 TOTAL: 504 arrests

DUIs

This Week: 1

2025 YTD: 253

2024 YTD: 237

2024 TOTAL: 241

Calls For Service

This Week: 136

2025 YTD: 21,581

2024 YTD: 22,568

2024 TOTAL: 23,258

Citations

This Week: 11

YTD: 1,467

2024 YTD: 1,755

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 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 41 |
| 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 three officer positions, and one communications position.

One interview and a psychological was conducted on a police applicant. We are currently waiting for the GBI Polygraph results for this applicant.

One application has been received for the open communications officer position. We are currently conducting a background check on the applicant.

Daily Information

12/14: During our annual Holiday Party, several of our officers and professional staff were recognized for promotions and awards! We are very proud of all our Team members!

Promotions:

Communications Officer Katherine Beattie was promoted to 911 Manager.

Officer Louis Crider was promoted to Senior Patrol Officer.

Senior Patrol Officer Garrett Goatley was promoted to Corporal.

Education:

LT Erica Coreno received the Academic Achievement Award for earning her Bachelor's Degree.

CPL Theodore Page received the Learning and Development Award for obtaining the highest number of training hours for the year. (300+)

Top Gun:

SGT Sam Stuber received the Rifle Marksmanship Award for having the highest qualification score.

Traffic Safety Awards:

1st Place: Officer Spencer Santiago

2nd Place: CPL Garrett Goatley

3rd Place: Officer Robert Lawlor

Teammate of the Quarter:

4th Quarter: CPL Garrett Goatley

Teammates of the Year:

Officer of the Year: Spencer Santiago

Professional Staff Member of the Year: Amberly Warren

12/16: Team TIPD joined the Ronald McDonald House again for Shop with a Cop! This program buys presents for current and past guests of the Ronald McDonald

House of the Coastal Empire.



Really Rockin' Christmas is collecting NEW stuffed animals to donate to children in the hospital. There is a bin in the lobby of the police department for those who would like to donate!



Upcoming Events:

12/31: New Years Eve events

01/01: Polar Bear Plunge

The Week with Fire

Summary of calls for service Dec. 12-18:

- 12/12/2025 02:55 – Assist invalid
- 12/12/2025 12:46 – Medical assist, assist EMS crew
- 12/12/2025 16:42 – No incident found on arrival at dispatch address
- 12/12/2025 17:17 – EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury
- 12/12/2025 21:39 – EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury
- 12/13/2025 00:20 – Medical assist, assist EMS crew
- 12/13/2025 07:35 – False alarm or false call, other
- 12/14/2025 10:34 – Alarm system activation, no fire – unintentional
- 12/14/2025 15:42 – Motor vehicle accident with no injuries
- 12/16/2025 14:18 – False alarm or false call, other

- 12/16/2025 14:44 – Medical assist, assist EMS crew
- 12/16/2025 19:25 – EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury
- 12/17/2025 15:04 – Medical assist, assist EMS crew
- 12/18/2025 04:11 – Medical assist, assist EMS crew
- 12/18/2025 16:56 – Water vehicle fire

Points of Interest

1. **Boat Fire Response** — B Shift handled an unusual call Friday afternoon involving a vessel fire on the Back River. Crews deployed the Search and Rescue ski and directed a water cannon toward the burning boat. The captain refused to abandon ship, and a civilian boater assisted by washing water onto the vessel with his prop wash. It made for quite a scene, but the fire was extinguished and TIFR cleared the scene without further incident.
2. **Ocean Rescue Lifeguard Training Plan** — Beach Manager Jen Bishop has developed a comprehensive two-day orientation program for next season's lifeguards. The plan aligns with United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) and American Red Cross (ARC) standards.
3. **NASBLA Training Opportunity** — Savannah Fire Department is hosting NASBLA Boat Operator Search and Rescue (BOSAR) and Boat Crew Member courses early next year. Sggt Jake Meiners plans to attend, and we hope to send a few additional members.

These nationally standardized courses fall under NASBLA's Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program, recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard as the standard for maritime law enforcement and emergency response training. The Boat Crew Member course provides foundational training in boat operations for crew-level personnel, covering team coordination, basic navigation, risk management, and support roles in marine emergencies. The BOSAR course builds on that foundation with advanced operator-level skills specific to search and rescue missions, including boat handling in adverse conditions, search patterns, victim recovery, dewatering, towing, and firefighting from small vessels.

Participation will directly enhance our team's ability to operate watercraft safely and effectively, especially in high-risk scenarios like vessel fires, distressed boaters, or open-water rescues. This training will strengthen our maritime response capabilities and ensure better preparedness for the types of incidents we encounter on and around Tybee's waters.

The Week with Community Development

Live Oak Update

Total linear conduit placed to date: 123,724 ft (23.43 miles):

- City staff approved the last three right-of-way permits for the Live Oak project.
- Conduit is being installed at the River's End Campground and the Public Works facility.
- GDOT permitting is still needed to reach the South Annex and the Info Hut.
- City staff and Live Oak's contractor management will be having more in-person meetings as the project wraps up.

Sustainability Update

- The Sustainability Coordinator position is being advertised: [City of Tybee Island Sustainability Coordinator](#).
- The first batch of recycling containers (part of the Reecycling and Waste Diversion Grant from GA EPD) has arrived at DPW.

Floodplain Management

With the federal government shutdown, the City of Tybee's five-year review and verification of our participation in the Community Rating System was postponed. Staff submitted required documentation for the annual certification review.

Building

The City of Tybee Island's adopted technical codes are the same codes adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) per Section 9-050-Technical Codes adopted of the Land Development Code. While the International Code Council updates codes every three years, DCA typically adopts every other code cycle (with Georgia Amendments), and the last adopted update was in 2018. Upon recommendation of the State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC), the DCA Board voted to adopt the following codes(*) with an **effective date of January 1, 2026**, under the authority granted to the Board of Community Affairs by O.C.G.A. § 8-2-23. Some previously adopted codes remain in effect.

Adopted Mandatory Technical Codes:

- 2024 International Residential Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2024 International Building Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2024 International Fuel Gas Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2023 National Electrical Code with 2026 Georgia Amendments*
- 2024 International Fire Code as adopted by the Safety Fire Commissioner*
- 2024 International Mechanical Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2024 International Plumbing Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2024 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code with Georgia Amendments*
- 2015 International Energy Conservation Code with Georgia Supplements

Amendments Adopted Permissive Codes:

- 2012 Disaster Resilient Building Code IBC Appendix with Georgia Amendments
- 2012 Disaster Resilient Building Code IRC Appendix with Georgia Amendments
- 2018 International Property Maintenance Code with Georgia Amendments
- 2018 International Existing Building Code with Georgia Amendments
- 2008 National Green Building Standard with Georgia Amendments

Land Development Code Updates

The proposed omnibus updates to the LDC went to a feedback session with Planning Commission in November 2025. The updates were presented to Planning Commission for recommendation at the December 15, 2025, public hearing. Planning Commission recommended approval with minor changes. We have tentatively scheduled a workshop on Feb. 11, 2026, with public hearing and first reading before City Council on February 12, 2026. The recommended changes and the process to get there can be reviewed at www.alktyb.org/ldc_update.

Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is an essential feature of long-term planning for the City of Tybee Island, as both the process and the documentation for creating a broad, long-term vision for future land uses and the built environment on the island. Our comprehensive plan contains a map of future land uses or character areas for the city, addressing the goals and strategies for that area. Georgia requires

municipalities to update their comprehensive plans every five years. The kickoff meeting with CRC is anticipated for the first City Council meeting on February 12, 2026.

An important part of the Comprehensive Planning process is the development of the **stakeholder (advisory) committee. The stakeholder committee traditionally has 10 members.** Applications were due December 23, 2025. The appointments will be made at the January 8, 2026, City Council meeting.

City Engineer Weekly

North End Sanitary Sewer Rehab Project

- Work began in early December, and is moving forward on-schedule.
- The contractor has installed dewatering wells, and new sanitary sewer on Pearwood Avenue from Dogwood to Pulaski, as well as new manhole at Pearwood and Dogwood
- This week the contractor will be working on Dogwood Avenue. The following is this week's holiday work schedule:
 - Dec. 29 until noon Dec. 31: Contractor working
 - Noon Dec. 31 through Jan. 1: Project closed
 - Jan. 2: Contractor working
 - Jan. 3-4: Project closed
 - Jan. 5-9: Contractor working on Pulaski Street

New Fire Station Development

- Architectural Services proposals were due December 16; six responses were received.
- Created selection committee to review and score responses
- Will award at first Council Meeting in February

15th Street Stormwater Improvements

- Plans are in final design. Meeting to be scheduled with Thomas and Hutton in early January to discuss issues on Chatham Avenue
- Planning on a late January construction RFP advertisement, and early March bid opening

Solomon Avenue Traffic/Streetscape Modifications

- Coordinating with Sewer and Water staff to televise sanitary sewer on Solomon Avenue between Byers and Mckenzie
- Working with DPW to order traffic control devices and construct other physical improvements
- Placing Solomon Avenue paving into FY2027 Program

Annual Street Paving

- Held pre-construction meeting with contractor last week
- Paving scheduled to begin January 12, 2026
- Paving will include the following segments:
 - Lovell Avenue – 9th Street to 14th Street
 - 7th Street – Butler Avenue to Jones Avenue
 - 9th Street – Butler Avenue to Lovell Avenue
 - 11th Street – Butler Avenue to Lovell Avenue

- 12th Street – Butler Avenue to Jones Avenue
- Jones Avenue – 1st Street (USH 80) to Solomon Avenue

Public Works Weekly

DPW

- Completed grading the North Beach Parking Lot and Solomon Avenue.
- Cleaned up the event detail from the Christmas Parade and Holiday Market.
- Completed the stormwater installation at 7th Street and Butler Ave.
- Finished the installation of the fence behind the Police Department.
- Performed maintenance on the outfalls.
- Cleaned out the catch basins in anticipation of rain.
- Picked up litter along the beach Monday through Friday.
- Cleaned and organized the Conex containers in the back of the DPW yard.
- Performed preventative maintenance and checks on the trash compactors.
- Completed various work orders submitted through the citizen request tracker.
- 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.

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 three bales of cardboard.
- Picked up street recycling from Tybrisa and the beach crossovers.
- Sorted incoming cardboard from local businesses.
- Called in and assisted with a cardboard bale pickup.
- Picked up and sorted Food Pantry's cardboard trailer.
- 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.
- Performed two tree assessments and issued three removal permits.

Fleet

- Completed the fuel inventory and refilled the diesel fuel containers.
- Assisted the Heavy Construction crew with repairing the motor grader.
- Cleaned and organized the shop.
- Connected the hydraulic lines of the JCB backhoe to the bucket.
- Ordered and installed the new battery for vehicle #241.
- Added air to the tires of vehicle # 183 for the Police Department.
- Assisted the Building Maintenance crew with repairing the tractor.
- Ordered and installed a new radiator for vehicle #217.
- Performed an oil change and added stop leak to ensure the truck doesn't overheat.
- Completed all necessary office paperwork, filing and organizing.
- Removed and replaced the hydraulic lines from vehicle #204 for the Recycling Crew.

Personnel

- New City custodian position started on December 18.
- One open laborer position.
- One small engine mechanic position on hold.

Water and Sewer Weekly

- Yearly toxicity sampling performed at Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Several locates performed for Live Oak Fiber installation.
- Sewer line jetted at 1506 2nd Avenue.
- Televised sewer line at 1506 2nd Avenue.
- Manhole raised at 1506 2nd Avenue.
- Repaired water leak on Bay Street.
- Helped stormwater team locate several lines.
- Ordered needed supplies.
- Worked on water line in front of AJ's restaurant.
- Received permit to install a grease trap at AJ's restaurant.
- Contractors from USG continue to work on Fort Screven elevated water tank.
- Routine maintenance and checks performed at the lift stations and water wells.
- Jam Electric repaired aeration pumping system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Maintained operations and lab at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Around the Campground

- 40 Arrivals, 219 Site Nights, 30% Occupancy, Down 2% YoY.
- Replaced rotten deck boards on Cabin 103.
- Replaced flat/worn tires on Club Car precedent.
- Diagnosed and replaced faulty fuel control module on Campground Truck.
- Announced the promotion of Tammy Rogers from Campground Clerk to Office Supervisor. Tammy first started at the campground as a seasonal volunteer workamper in 2009. She's had a few brief stints away, but has been a consistent presence since 2012. She was then hired as a full time employee in January of

2024. She brings a wealth of camping knowledge and customer service experience, and we are excited about the next step!

Have a great week everyone!



www.cityoftybee.org

Bret Bell

City Manager

403 Butler Avenue
P.O. Box 2749
Tybee Island, Georgia 31328

 bret.bell@cityoftybee.gov
 (912) 472-5070
 (912) 412-4660