

City of Hillcrest Village

Mayor's Update

The mayor's update is a report to the residents of Hillcrest Village that provides information on Council meetings and other items that impact the Village. Working with the City Council, these updates will be open and give transparent insights into the Village operations.

Mayor Brad Dawson

Regular Session Hillcrest Village Council Meeting
October 21, 2024

1. The Operations Report was presented by Caleb Cristofaro from MDS, LLC.
 - a. This report provides information on monthly water distribution and sanitary collection systems. This includes the city water plants and the wastewater plant.
 - b. Caleb reported the work to update the control panel at well #3 is complete. CenterPoint has reconnected the electrical service and certain operational tests are being run so that we may bring that system back online. This project refurbished the wiring, breakers and brought that control panel up to current codes.
 - c. The damage Hurricane Beryl caused to some infrastructure has been repaired.
 - d. The transition to MDS handling the water billing is nearing completion. See the follow-up report below for more information.
2. Marshal Shohn Davison presented the September Marshal's Report.
 - a. Monthly cases included calls for service, traffic citations and warnings as well as vacation watch checks were presented. The Marshalls office had two officers resign this month to take better paying jobs with other agencies. Marshall has two replacements coming online soon.
3. Travis Hobbs, Emergency Management Coordinator, discussed ongoing meetings with FEMA, Brazoria County and the Mayor concerning Hurricane Beryl recovery relief and the documentation those agencies require. A report updating the council on grants was presented. More on the grants status in the follow-up report below.
4. The minutes of the September 16, 2024, council meeting and the September 30, 2024 special session were reviewed and approved as presented.

FOLLOW UP BUSINESS

- A. KM&L CPA firm presented the general audit for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 to the council. Other than a minor housekeeping item we were already in the process of handling, the General fund for the city is in good shape financially. More information below.
- B. Discussion and possible action on establishing a municipal court was next on the agenda. The council approved establishing a municipal court in June 2024. We agreed at that time to delay that action until the new FY 2024/2025 we just entered.

NEW BUSINESS

- C. Discussion and possible action on designating two people to be H-GAC representatives. Alderman McGilvray and Mayor Dawson were appointed.
- D. A discussion on establishing a Policies and Procedures Statement and a Procurement Policy for Federal and non-Federal purposes followed. Alderman Armistead is spearheading that project.
- E. Resident Rob Boyle requested a review of his plans to construct a garage addition on his home at 103 W. Timberlane. The plans were approved, and he will be starting that project soon.

This Mayor's Update summarizes the most recent meeting of the city council. Council meetings are held every third Monday at the City Hall located on 200 W. Timberlane Dr. next to the city park at 6:00 pm. This report does not replace the official city council minutes which are always reviewed and approved at the next council meeting. Those minutes are archived on the city website as required and readily available.

Mayor's Follow Up Comments

- 1) Concerning MDS assuming water billing duties for Hillcrest Village. The transition is virtually complete with the water bills for October being the first month under the new system. There will be a newsletter in the water bills for the next couple months but some of the highlights are:
 - a) A more streamlined billing process from meter reading to bill creation. This will save the city on accounting expenses.
 - b) An after-hours **emergency** phone number.
 - c) A payment drop box is being installed at the City Building on 200 W. Timberlane for those who prefer to pay by check.
 - d) You will still be able to pay online or by auto-pay if you do that now.
 - e) There may be some hiccups on the first billing cycle or two but please be patient it will be worth it going forward.
- 2) Emergency Management Coordinator, Travis Hobbs, reported the grant for a new generator at well #3 on Timberlane Dr, is still winding it's way through the system. The MIT- MOD grant to replace the city sewer lines is in the same situation. The city has responded to all additional information requests on each project and we are waiting. Such is the process of applying for grants. Travis updated the council on the new trash cans for the city park. The lids for the cans are back ordered but should be arriving soon. We have had these beautiful commercial receptacles for awhile now but have been holding off installing them until the order is complete.
- 3) As reported, the independent audit of the city financials is complete. The General Fund is in excellent shape. The Enterprise Fund concerns water and sewer systems. We have been upgrading, replacing and repairing much of the above ground equipment. Highlights include the recently completed electrical control panel at well #3 and we have the control panels being replaced at two of our three lift stations on the sewer lines before the end of this year. It is my goal to have everything above ground on our infrastructure system properly maintained, repaired and replaced as necessary by Spring. We will then turn our attention to the pipes below ground. This means we are putting every cent from water bills back into the system, as it should be.
- 4) Decades ago, Hillcrest Village was highlighted in Parade Magazine as the best small city in Texas in which to live. Living here for the past four years my wife and I have grown to

love Hillcrest. I am constantly amazed that people who grew up here and left to pursue lives and employment outside of the area have moved back. I can only imagine the reasons are the fond memories they have of life here as a child and they want the same life for their children. It is a quality of life that is slipping away before their eyes. I urge you to drive around and take an honest look at things as they are now. Hillcrest has ordinances concerning the health, safety and overall appearance of the city that we are unable to enforce. I have challenged the council by asking "what will be the legacy of this council and city government? Are we going to be content to turn over the city as it is to the next generation of leaders or do we fix the problems before us so they will inherit a fully functional city in which to live and raise their children and your grandchildren?"

I strongly believe we need to gather all city leaders and have a frank discussion on the direction of Hillcrest and develop a plan of action to halt the slide into disrepair. I have called for a series of meetings starting next month so we can draft a plan to hit the ground running in the New Year and begin to turn things around. It is my sincerest hope and prayer we make Hillcrest Village "the best small city in Texas" again.

All the best to you. Be Blessed, Brad Dawson - Mayor