

# 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  
November 18, 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. Operational testing was completed and the water well #3 is back online.
  - c. The transition to MDS handling the water billing is proceeding. The council previously asked for a complete audit of the city water meters and they are carrying that request out this month.
  - d. More information on billing and payment options is in the Mayor's follow-up comments below.
2. Marshal Shohn Davison presented the October Marshal's Report.
  - a. Monthly cases included calls for service, traffic citations and warnings as well as vacation watch checks were presented. The Marshall outlined a proposal to schedule more patrols during the holiday season and throughout the coming year.
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.
4. The minutes of the October 21, 2024 council meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.

### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and possible action on accepting one of the three proposals presented to apply an epoxy/polyaspartic finish on the floor of the city building. One proposal was accepted, and the work will be scheduled soon. More on this item in the Mayor's comments below.
- B. The Christmas Luminary Candle sales schedule was discussed and staffing for the sale hours is being filled out. The decades long tradition of lighting the luminaries on Christmas Eve lives on!

- C. A discussion on establishing an Investment Policy, a Policies and Procedures Statement and a Procurement Policy for Federal and non-Federal purposes followed. Alderman Armistead is spearheading that project.
- D. The council approved the Brazoria County Engineering Proposal on four road and drainage projects. More on this in the Mayor's comments below.
- E. A discussion on the Marshall's office responsibilities and plans in the event of a hurricane or other disaster followed. The Marshall and the Emergency Management Coordinator agreed to update the city's existing emergency manuals with the most current data, contact information and procedures.
- F. The council reviewed and approved the FY 2023/2024 budget amendments.
- G. Discussion and action on Brazoria County Appraisal District Board of Directors election.
- H. A discussion on renewing the SAM.gov account for the City of Hillcrest Village and the steps necessary to complete that renewal followed.

**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 ongoing with the water bills for October being the first month under the new system. As expected there have been some bumps in the road to the process. The council requested a complete audit of the resident water meter system. That audit is in process. Some of the questions received by the city office include:
- 2) **Who is MDS?** The city is run by unpaid volunteers and does not have a public works department. When the city was created a state licensed contractor was hired to run and maintain the water/sewer infrastructure. Various licensed contractors have been handling those duties over the years. MDS has been managing our infrastructure since 2009.
- 3) **Why did the city make this change?**
  - 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 that the city did not have previously.
  - c) A payment drop box is now installed at the City Building on 200 W. Timberlane for those who prefer to pay by check but do not want to drive into Alvin to pay at the current city office or mail it in using the USPS. This is a convenience many residents have been requesting for decades.
- 4) **Who collects the payments from the drop box and will my payment be late if the contents of the drop box are collected after the due date of the water bill?**
  - a) MDS is the only one who can collect the contents of the drop box. If your payment is in the drop box before the due date and the normal schedule of the courier that collects the contents of the drop box is after the due date, you will not be charged a late fee. It is your responsibility to have that payment in the drop box **before** the due date.
- 5) **Will I be able to use the auto pay function to pay my water bill as I did in the past? Will I be able to receive my water bills electronically online? Will I be able to make my water bill payment using a credit card or debit card online as I used to do?**

- a) The answer to those questions is yes, yes, and yes. The complete audit of the water meters has delayed the implementation of those options to pay your bill. Those options should be up and running soon. In the meantime, you will receive your water bill by mail. Be sure to check the envelope in which you receive the water bill for information letters concerning the progress of this billing upgrade. On the bill is information on where to mail your payment **OR** you can use the drop box at the city building located at 200 W. Timberlane. There will be no late fees assessed or disconnections through the first of the year while this transition is in progress.
- 6) We have a storage problem at the city building. The storeroom is overflowing. Additionally, the adoption of a municipal court, which the council approved last month, will place more demands for space to be able to operate. The city council has discussed for years different ways to improve the overall appearance of the bare concrete floor inside the building. This flooring treatment and storage improvements were budgeted for in the 2024/2025 budget we just approved. It makes sense to improve the appearance of that concrete floor before we build anything on top of it.
- 7) The Brazoria County Engineering proposal for Road and Drainage projects in 2025. We submitted requests for projects in 2025. The road surface on West Timberlane between those speed bumps is in rough condition. The county has agreed to remove the speed bumps and resurface the road for a nominal fee of the materials. Additionally, the East end of Timberlane on the east side of Riverside is in terrible shape and the corner there is crumbling. The county agreed to resurface that short section between Riverside and the resident's driveway at the end of East Timberlane.  
I spoke previously about trying to improve the drainage on the west side of Main St. particularly at the intersections of Wildwinn, Sherwood and Larkspur. The county has agreed to help by removing mounded ground between the driveway culverts from Timberlane to Mustang. That should improve the water flow away from those intersections. The other drainage project is clearing the culverts across Main St. and W. Crestmont. Those culverts got plugged up from Hurricane Beryl.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone. Wishing you a good day visiting with family and friends. Next week kicks off the holiday season. Remember, Hillcrest Village will be having another Holiday lighting contest this year. No need to apply, just decorate the front of your home as the spirit of the season moves you. Judging will take place on Sunday December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The 60 year tradition of the Lighting of the Luminaries continues on Christmas Eve at dusk. Candle sale schedules will be posted on the website and on the bulletin board at the city building by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The prices for the candles is the same as last year.

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