



We are just days away from the four-month mark of Michael’s devastating blow but the strength of our community is evident. Businesses are reopening, owners are repairing, and just a few days from now owners will begin the rebuilding process.

At City Hall, recovery activities are well-underway. To better serve you, our new hours will be 8:00am to 4:00pm central Monday – Friday and Saturdays as necessary.

If you’ve been keeping up with our work you know that we are leading the County in recovery. Mexico Beach had the first Hurricane Michael reimbursement request of \$2.8M obligated and approved by both FEMA and the State (that’s a really big deal) and we have a second reimbursement request of almost \$4M submitted. The Governor’s commitment to give us an additional \$2.8M to assist in our recovery is also on its way to us as we signed that agreement on February 1st. We will continue to work hard, work smart, and make good decisions for our City.

To keep you informed, here’s an update on key activities:

Water – Most of the City’s water service infrastructure has been repaired and the remaining repairs will be put out for competitive bid. Remember, even if you are not sure that it is a water line break, if you see water please give us a call.

Sewer – The sewer system has been a little more challenging. Most everything south side of Hwy 98 from 8th Street to Canal Parkway is out of service (owners wishing to bring in an RV, must have a wastewater containment bladder). The damage assessment of the system is complete and our City engineers will now design the repair. That work should be put out for competitive bid within the next two to three weeks and we expect to see construction begin in March. Restoration of all utilities is our number one priority.

Sanitation – The new sanitation routes seem to be working out well. The curbside collection has freed up resources we can deploy elsewhere. We send a big THANK YOU to our citizens who bring their cans to the street as we are stronger when we work together. If you are heading out of town, we have a courtesy dumpster at the public works building for convenient drop off.

Private Property Demolition and Debris Removal – If you are uninsured or your insurance doesn’t cover demolition or debris, be sure to complete a right-of-entry form so the City can take care of that for you. Keep in mind that every demolition requires a FEMA site visit before we can perform the work and unimproved property is not eligible. Forms are available at City Hall or on our website. To request:

Service	Deadline to Submit	Link for Waiver and Instructions
Debris Only	02/15/2019	http://www.mexicobeachgov.com/pdfs/3067121018033533.pdf
Demolition and Debris	02/22/2019	http://www.mexicobeachgov.com/pdfs/141012519022904.pdf

If you hire a contractor for debris removal or demolition please be sure they avoid the area of the water meter when using heavy equipment. Demolition requires a permit from the building department and if insurance pays for the work, your contractor must haul-off the debris rather than pushing it to the right-of-way.

Construction debris resulting from repair work cannot be placed by the road. The contractor must haul off the debris or provide an on-site dumpster. Contractors or owners can be subject to fines or other penalties.

City Clean-up – We are about 85% complete with cleaning waterways and storm ditches. The final step will be screening the water to remove small floating debris. Beach clean-up is underway and should be complete by March 1 and removal of debris in the water to the second sand bar will begin shortly with an April 1st target completion date.

As for right-of-way debris collection, once we complete the final raking for the right-of-way we will no longer collect in that area. Property owners must haul-off debris after that time. Our target date to complete all right-of-way collection is April 1st.

We get calls asking why the City isn't collecting debris in areas as you enter town. The reason is that debris on unimproved private property is not eligible for collection unless it is a health and safety hazard so owners will have to arrange for this work. After April 1, any remaining debris will fall under the code enforcement process. Rest assured, we are committed to cleaning our City.

Changes to Construction Code – Beginning February 11th owners can begin reconstruction or new construction of homes and accessory buildings. Please have your paperwork ready when you come to City Hall. Permit forms and development order applications are available in the City Hall lobby or you can find them on line at: <http://www.mexicobeachgov.com/building-department.cfm>. Please remember that all contractors are required to register with the City before pulling permits.

To allow us to be more resilient for the next storm, the City Council will adopt the following changes to the Land Development Code:

- Wind load requirement is increased to 140 mph.
- Finished floor elevations are increased 1.5 feet above the .2% base flood elevation in zones A, AE, and shaded X. The increase only applies to new construction and homes that were substantially damaged. If you are seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL), your elevation will be determined by Florida Department of Environment Protection (DEP). The new requirements will not change when flood insurance is required as those rules are determined by FEMA. To determine your home's elevation: <http://www.mexicobeachgov.com/pdfs/473213019105618.pdf>.
- All accessory structures require a permit and site layout regardless of size. Accessory Structures must meet appropriate building code (including tie-down), impervious ratio, and cannot be located within the setback.

The Council is determined to help as many owners as possible to rebuild, so they have adopted an exemption to our Comprehensive Land Plan which allows owners whose homes were destroyed to rebuild to the same density as they had prior to the storm.

Fire Department – We continue to receive calls regarding the fire assessment. The current assessment is based on the property as of October 1, 2018. This month the Council will begin discussions regarding how to budget for the fire department for the next fiscal year and they are in agreement that we must have a more fair and equitable process.

Our State Emergency Management Agency tells us that we must be ever-vigilant as the dead and dying vegetation and debris hazards surrounding our City place us at great risk for fire especially as the weather warms up and things dry out. Our Fire Department is a fully certified, fully staffed 24/7 professional operation with the equipment necessary to protect lives and property. Our new fire truck will arrive with a little fanfare within the next few weeks providing even more protection.