



City of FREEPORT

430 N. Brazosport Blvd • Freeport, TX 77541 • 979.239.1211 • Fax 979.239.2075

Brooks Bass
Mayor

Tim Kelty
City Manager

February 16, 2021

EMERGENCY RESPONSE LETTER

Open letter to Citizens of Freeport

This is a trying time for the Citizens of Freeport and for the entire state of Texas. We are facing an unprecedented combination of critical system challenges for which we try to plan and prepare, but in the moment react to, and ultimately adapt to, to best serve our citizens in both the short and long term.

In regard to the power outage, we have been in regular contact with Centerpoint with the intention of communicate expectations. However, the challenges they continue to face came without warning and have not been made clear to local officials. What has been communicated as recently as late this afternoon, is that local infrastructure issues have been addressed, and Centerpoint is awaiting the availability of power so that they can re-energize the system. This will come in phases and they have indicated to Freeport officials that power would be restored in the area that it was lost. They have also requested specific addresses critical to public safety be identified and they would attempt to restore those areas with greater urgency. But no estimate has been given for the timeframe for restoration.

The next challenge the city faces is in regard to City Water and Sewer. With extended below-freezing temperatures not seen in a very long time, concern regarding frozen pipes has led residents to wisely set faucets to trickle to prevent pipes from freezing and potentially bursting. This, combined with a significant number of actual pipes bursting has caused a tremendous demand for water in the system for which the system could not keep up. As a result, Veolia advised the city late this afternoon that the two elevated towers were drained which led to insufficient system pressure and the TCEQ mandated Boil Water Advisory. As soon as the system is able to catch back up and system pressure restored, samples will be sent to a lab for testing and the boil notice can be lifted. It will be at least 36 hours after pressure is restored that the boil notice may be lifted



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The power outage has also led to potential sewer issues. Many of the city's sewer lift stations have been without power since early Monday morning. As those lift stations fill up, they will back up into the system and prevent additional flow from homes. If you allow your sink to trickle please do not leave them unattended because it could potentially lead to flooding issues in individual homes. Late Tuesday night, Veolia began using a portable generator to pump the individual lift station down to relieve backups in the system.

Finally, communication has been challenged. Without power, Cell phones run down and the disruption to AT&T service for phone, data, and text has led to compounded challenges, negatively impacting our ability to communicate with each other and with the public.

However, we adapt. To a great extent we have overcome the challenges of internal communication. We have found ways to communicate with the public, and we are addressing the needs of the public the best we can.

A few take aways:

- Take Care of each other. You all know of those who are most vulnerable. Check in on Friends and Neighbors to make sure they are ok.
- Use portable generators responsibly, allowing for proper ventilation.
- Boil water before consuming or drink bottled water.
- Sign up for Everbridge alerts from the City giving you the most up-to-date information available to the city.
- Remember the city does have a limited number of beds at the warming center set up in the lower level of the police station. More are available through cooperation with the Salvation Army and City of Lake Jackson at the Lake Jackson Rec Center.

Remember by the Grace of God we will get through this together.

Sincerely

Tim Kelty
City Manager