



**PUBLIC INFORMATION**

ITEM NO. 3.

**DATE OF MEETING:** August 19, 2013

**REQUESTED BY:** Chairman George Brown

**SHORT TITLE:** Recognition of Town of Surf City Firefighters Mark Weber, Jonathan Burton, Tim Hobbs, and Noah Hoffer, who Performed Heroic Efforts by Saving a Vacationer from Drowning in Surf City on June 23, 2013.

**BACKGROUND:** Mr. Bill Phillips from Salem, VA was vacationing on Topsail Island back in June. On Sunday, June 23, 2013, he was caught in a rip current. He managed to go with the rip current and to float. Mr. Phillips' wife and friends noticed he was in trouble and called 911. Mr. Weber went out to Mr. Phillips and the others assisted from land. A letter of gratitude from Mr. Phillips is attached.

7-19-2013

Mayor Zander Guy, Jr. and Council members,

Chairman George Brown and Commissioners of Pender County,

This letter is to show at least part of my huge gratification to members of the Surf City Fire Department, Police Department, and Pender County EMS.

On Sunday, June 23 2013, I was caught in a rip current while vacationing on Topsail Island. At first it seemed that I had met my end. Somehow I had enough sense to stop fighting it and go with the rip current. I tried to call for help, not knowing if anyone heard me. I finally realized that my best bet was to float and hope help would arrive.

I was noticed thanks to alert friends and my wife. They called 911, and from what they tell me, help arrived in record time. Time was lost to me during this ordeal. Their speedy arrival likely saved my life. I am pretty sure that I would not have survived much longer. Two young men, one with a surf board, made it out to me and brought me back in. They were brave to come into those conditions. They undertook a very daunting task too as it must be horrible just to think you might be getting a body and not a live person. I was no small task for those gents either, being 6'6" tall and weighing over 270 lbs. I was more than tired and therefore not much help.

Once on land, after finding my wife's arms, I was quickly greeted by a very professional and friendly EMS crew. We think from station number 6. After a thorough check it was determined I might just live a little longer.

I wish I had the names of those there to help. I really wish I had been able to give them some of the thanks they deserve. I remained in a bit of a "fog" after that happened. Please express the extreme gratitude that I have for each of those ladies and gentlemen.

I may have never walked in their shoes, but have some understanding of the sacrifice they make for folks like me. They studied, worked, and practiced hard to have the positions they do. They have long boring times interrupted by incidents that can be rewarding but often very scary, intense, challenging, and life changing. They see and deal with things most of us don't want to even think about. They in no way get the recognition they deserve. They are heroes.

My family and friends are quite grateful too. Without their help the rest of our/their week at the beach would have sucked badly.

Most sincerely (and glad to be able to return for vacation next year),



Bill Phillips  
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