

**Charles Burkett**

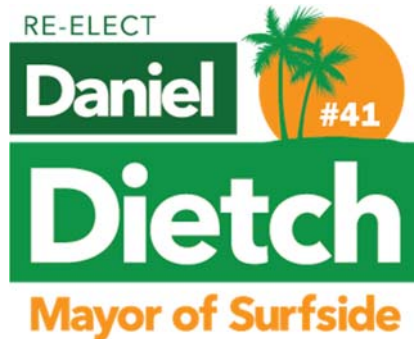
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**Subject:** RE: Surfside: We've Come A Long Way, Together

**From:** Mayor Daniel Dietch <[info@danieldietch.com](mailto:info@danieldietch.com)>

**Date:** February 20, 2020 at 8:43:44 AM EST

**Subject:** Surfside: We've Come A Long Way, Together



Surfsiders,

**When I was first elected as your Mayor, we were in the midst of what was known as the Great Recession.** Surfside was not immune from the hardship and choices had been made by the former Commission that challenged our ability to bounce back, including depleting our cash reserves to pay for our new community center and cutting core personnel adversely affecting community services. Further, several failed development projects left our Town stagnant and scarred by abandoned “sand lots.”

Recognizing the challenges, **my top priority then was to develop the Town’s first-ever Five Year Financial Forecast.** Updated twice since, the document identified the residential tax burden was approaching 90% and unless something changed, it would continue increasing and our financial condition would worsen. The **Five Year Financial Forecast** presented scenarios that ranged from do nothing, which would have resulted in bankruptcy, to focusing on strategies to diversify our tax base through residential and tourist-based projects. The latter would enable the Town to increase revenue to: invest in neglected assets; expand and provide higher quality services; and build our financial reserves to implement future projects like renovating the 96<sup>th</sup> Street Park.

As we emerged from the economic downturn, Surfside benefited financially from tax base enhancing, low density development that will continue to pay dividends and improve quality of life:

- Our tax base in 2010 was +/- \$1 billion, today it has TRIPLED exceeding +/- \$3 billion
- Our millage rate has decreased by more than 22% since 2011
- Our general fund reserves increased from +/- \$3 million in 2010 to +/- \$13 million today

**In addition to increasing revenue, I prioritized ethical and financial transparency and accountability.** I led the effort to strengthen our ethics requirements: by revamping lobbying registration requirements; creating new conflict disclosure requirements; and clarifying exploitation of office standards. In addition, we implemented an integrated computer system to connect all departments at Town Hall streamlining accountability and operations, disclosed all expenditures on the Town Website, and re-instituted the highest level of audit scrutiny, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which had been abandoned by the former Commission. We have been recognized and awarded for our accountability and transparency efforts:

- ***Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting*** for the last 8 years - Government Finance Officers Association
- ***Distinguished Budget Presentation Award*** for the last 4 years - Government Finance Officers Association
- ***Public Pension Standards Award for both Funding and Administration*** for the last 2 years - Public Pension Coordinating Council.

I look forward to detailing more of our many accomplishments while laying out my future fiscal priorities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions, ideas, or suggestions. I hope to earn your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,

Daniel

**VOLUNTEER**

