

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

July 29, 2022

Message from the Manager:

On July 4, we celebrated the Independence of our great Nation. 2022 marks 246 years of independence! While our Nation has many deeply flawed moments, and the scars to show from it, our strength has always been found in our people and our ability to come together and work together. Our Nation will never be perfect as it is simply the product of us all. We all are flawed, and our Nation reflects our failures at times. The beauty of our Nation is it provides the framework for us to unify and strive together for a better tomorrow for us all. I feel blessed to be an American and to be a part of the great experiment which it represents!

Our City's Vision shares some similarities. Our Vision reads as follows: *To provide public services that empower people to focus on what matters most to them: their goals, hopes and dreams.* Our Vision is set on the horizon. By that I mean that our Vision is a journey not a destination. We won't ever fully achieve it. However, we improve our service levels every day we strive to reach our Vision. So why don't we fully achieve our Vision? This is where our Vision shares similarities with our Nation. Simply, we as individuals are flawed and that results in us falling short of our Vision at times. That would be a sad story if it ended with our failures! From that failure a beautiful narrative of service is built! Thomas Edison said it well when asked about his failures inventing the lightbulb. Edison said, *"I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps."* Edison looked at failures as learning opportunities – lessons on how to ultimately achieve his goals. Our story is much the same. We fail, we get back up and try again using the lessons we learned. Winston Churchill said this about success and failure, *"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."* I am thankful to serve alongside such a courageous Council and staff – all unified in service to our City!

David

"There is no failure except in no longer trying." - **Chris Bradford**

"We will not march back to what was. We move to what shall be, a country that is bruised, but whole. Benevolent, but bold. Fierce and free." – **Amanda Gorman**

General Updates:

Congrats to our Recently Promoted:

Officer Melissa Wolfe was promoted to the position of Sergeant on July 9th
Telecommunicator Louis Hill was promoted to the position of Police Officer Trainee on July 9th
Deputy Chief Betiale Hawkins was promoted to the position of Interim Chief of Police on July 16th

Welcome to Our New Hires:

Daniel Huff was hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on July 14th
Suzane Akpobo-Olusoga was hired for the position of Part Time Telecommunicator on July 20th
Brianna Daniel was hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on July 20th
Massoud Howayeck was hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on July 20th

Jose Villacorta was hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on July 20th
Jonathan Del Toro was hired for the position of Light Equipment Operator in Parks on July 21st
Melissa Chevalier Duenas was hired for the position of Deputy Court Clerk on July 22nd
Leslie Itibus was hired for the position of Telecommunicator on July 25th
Michael Gentry was hired for the position of Director of Police Services on July 25th
Kaily Funez-Lenon was hired for the position of Student Clerical Assistant on July 29th

Retirements:

Chief Phil Gadd retired on July 15th, after 7 years of service to the City
Code Enforcement Officer Gabrielle Guerra retired on July 28th, after 22 years of service to the City
Battalion Chief David Ayer will be retiring on July 30th, after 25 years of service to the City

Cortney Fye Elected to Secretary for Bluebonnet Chapter of the International Code

Council: Building Official Secretary Courtney Fye has been elected to the Secretary for the Bluebonnet Chapter of the International Code Council. Great job representing the City Courtney!

PD Leadership Update: With the retirement of Chief Gadd, Deputy Chief Betiale Hawkins has been promoted to Interim Chief of Police. Interim Chief Hawkins brings a wealth of knowledge and professionalism to the position and we are proud to have him assuming that mantle. Mike Gentry, former long serving Chief prior to Chief Gadd, has agreed to come on in the capacity of Director of Police Services. Director Gentry's role will be to provide mentorship throughout the Police Department as many will be moving into new leadership roles throughout the PD.

Route 66 Challenge: Congratulations to the following for completing the Route 66 Challenge in June: Leona Clay, Henry Nash, Lisa Youngblood, Gary Bates, Melissa Wolfe, Melonie Matthewson, Erica Rossmiller, Tiffany Maple and Kristina Roach. I'm very thankful to our HR Department for bringing such fun challenges for us to team build around and improve our overall health.

August Water Challenge: Our next challenge as a team will be a water challenge throughout August. The challenge will be to drink one-half of your body weight in ounces of water each day in August! For more information contact HR.

Music City Designation: The Greater HH Chamber of Commerce held an event to acknowledge and celebrate the City's designation as a Music City. The City's amphitheater at Carl Levin Park has been decorated with a mural provided by the great folks at Tap Tap Art School. Central Texas College's welding school provided a metal guitar that is affixed in the Park near the amphitheater. It was a great event and well attended. A big thanks to the Chamber on all their hard work on this event.

Farmers Market: The Harker Heights Farmers Market is ongoing! Come out to the City Hall parking lot for fresh vegetables, crafts and much, much more! The Market is every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Spotlight on Service:

Casey Brazzil and Parks Crew Thanked: HR recently thanked Casey Brazzil and Parks Crew for their assistance in helping them move office furniture. HR stated that they worked so fast that HR services were not even impacted by the move.

Angel Carroll and Destinee Barton are Stars: Healthy Homes efforts to assist those in need was featured on a recent TV interview on KXXV. Angel Carroll and Destinee Barton were featured and did such a great job describing what they do to assist our Police Department and citizens. They really are having a huge impact in helping those in need!

City Gives Back: Carter Blood Care thanked the City for a recent blood drive. They stated, “Our team would like to extend sincere gratitude for not only your personal time and effort to make this blood drive successful, but your organization’s support as well.”

Ursula Paddie Steps Up: I recently personally thanked Assistant City Secretary Ursula Paddie for all her help with Council agendas and meetings. Ursula really stepped up to help our team and did it well!

HR Keeps Us Fit: Assistant City Manager Jerry Bark gave a shout out to HR for keeping us healthy with their healthy living information emails and team challenges.

Destinee Barton Assists: Healthy Homes’ Destinee Barton was recently thanked by Detective Sergeant Melissa Jouett. MJ wrote, “Destinee’s passion for her line of work comes through when she exhibits this type of attention to detail and teamwork to ensure these suspects get prosecuted to the fullest degree.”

Michael Beard Goes Above and Beyond: Chief Building Official Michael Beard was recently thanked by Chick-fill-A. The contractor wrote that Mike was flexible and helped them stay on schedule. Mike’s flexibility allowed Chick-fil-A to remain open to patrons during the renovation process.

Leona Clay Supports Employees: HR Director Leona Clay was recently thanked by Police Officer Johnny King for opportunities he received while assigned to City Hall.

PAC Adds Up: The Pet Adoption Center was recently thanked by Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee for assistance on a budget matter. Their work made it much easier on Finance and Finance was very appreciative.

Kristina Ramirez and Courtney Fye Save Time for Finance: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to give her, “kudos and appreciation to Kristina Ramirez and Courtney Fye for going through Planning, Code Enforcement, and other miscellaneous fees and organizing them in such a way to make them clear and concise for the fee schedule as well as adding the Code in which they were approved for. This is going to make it easy for the Finance Staff to update for the 2023 fiscal year and surely took a great deal of time off of our hands.”

HR Praised: Tiffany Dake, Gary Bates, Alexis Jorgensen, Lisa Youngblood, and Henry Nash all wrote in thanking HR for the Route 66 Challenge and that they all enjoyed taking on the challenge.

Tanner Fleet, Jonathan Gutz, and Aaron Dunnam Provide Tremendous

Help: Firefighter/Paramedics Tanner Feet and Jonathan Gutz and Battalion Chief Aaron Dunnam recently assisted Nolanville with a grass fire. Nolanville Police Department called to thank FD and stated that these men, “were a tremendous help!”

Jordan Clopton Gets Special Thanks: A citizen came in and brought donuts to staff and wanted to give a special thanks to Firefighter Paramedic Jordan Clopton for giving her family a tour of the station.

Julie Helsham's Great Work: City Attorney Charlie Olson wrote to thank City Secretary Julie Helsham for her hard work on the initiative petition process. He states, "This is an area that none of us work in very often. She has done great work processing all of this and developing the necessary documents. I have been very impressed."

Deep Appreciation for FD: KDH's Harker Heights' Reporter Bob Massey wrote to me to express his deep appreciation for the Harker Heights Fire Department. Bob wrote, "What a group of professionals and especially the paramedics and firefighters who revived the family dog from smoke inhalation. That was something to behold. This was the first time I've had the chance to witness HHFD in action and take photos of their impressive work plus write the story about it. It instilled in me again that they are the best fire department I know about."

Calvin Fleming and Gabrielle Palma Congratulated: Code Enforcement Officers' Calvin Fleming and Gabrielle Palma were recently praised by a citizen for their good work. The citizen wrote, "As a Harker Heights resident of over 26 years I'd like to congratulate code enforcement for the outstanding service they provide. Without their diligence our city neighborhoods would not be as clean and groomed as they are now. The two individuals you have should be praised because of their continuing efforts to keep city codes enforced."