



Mayor's Message – November 2021

No place like Horseshoe Bay in the Autumn (even with our limited Fall color...it is still a place of crisp relaxed hill country living with great friends and neighbors....and a City of quality service.)

City News

EVERYONE is welcome to be a part of the volunteer decision making for your City. December appointments are open for varied committees (Broadband/Internet, Parks, Planning and Zoning, Board of Adjustments, Historical Preservation, and NEW Transportation). See <https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/> for details and applications. If you are one of our new residents – this is a great way to get involved and get to know your City and put your experience and interests forward to impact the continued support of quality living.

We are all benefitting from **Utility Director, Jeff Koska, stepping forward to serve as Interim City Manager** as we begin a comprehensive search for future management. Jeff brings over 30 years of service to our area and has a deep knowledge of all aspects of our City. He is well respected by his peers – making for seamless forward movement of all areas of service. His work is lightened by having high quality dept. leadership and focus on customer priority.

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Speaking of City Staff – **Thank you, again, for voting.** I am proud to see my neighbors who have already voted (the public record never shows how individuals vote). I see voting as one of the great American showcases of a free democracy. If you haven't had the chance to exercise your vote, early voting continues through Oct 29th; **final voting day will be Nov. 2nd at City Hall.**

This sales tax voting (the last two items on the ballot are for the City of Horseshoe Bay), can ensure over \$200K continues to come from sales tax (as it does now) for annual road maintenance. It also allows for an additional \$200K from sales to support other expenses for your city's function and the increases in costs we are all experiencing. **Payroll/benefits constitute over 75% of total budget** – almost entirely for direct first response services (police/fire/utility/public works). They are supported by a small team of just 15 core staff members (HR, IT, Finance, Public Records Management, Development Services, and City Manager). Each year the Council looks for ways to offset cost increases such as with recent bond refinancing, grant acquisition, and staff reorganization. The staffing costs increase annually and thankfully our growth has kept pace, providing for increases in salaries/insurance each year. The remaining 25% of the total budget supports all other expenses (police cars/fire engines/fuel, performance equipment, computers/software, and general operations - utilities, materials, phones, unfunded mandates, legal fees, etc). It is a lean budget that is managed with conservative planning to meet increased needs, but costs here continue to rise as with our own daily life experiences. This will help with our broadband infrastructure efforts, new projects, and ensuring competitive salary/workplace...all without raising property tax rates this year for general operations. **You can take pride in knowing that your vote matters!**

The Utility rate **will increase** somewhat this year. But **it is a 'pass through' expense** from the **Waste Management garbage pickup service who increased their fee** for collection by 3.25%. No increase in costs for water/wastewater treatment will come from the City.

You will see an article by City Staff – with more technical detail – citing a brief higher concentration of contamination in our water supply during the heavy summer rains. This is similar to the occurrence during the flood in 2018 when excessive water flow entered our system. When debris and organic matter is stirred up, the balance of chemical treatment must be adjusted. The staff successfully optimized the treatment process, but **even a brief one-day incidence of exceeding the recommended .080 mgs per liter requires response and notification** to keep us transparent and accountable (ours popped up briefly to .083). Keeping a balance of disinfection and flushing is a constant monitoring and manipulation in the treatment process. The City staff, since receiving this testing result in August, made correction a priority – resulting in testing samples showing an immediate return to fully safe levels. If you ever tour the water treatment plant, you will likely be surprised by the amount of computer software and staff monitoring of chemical treatment protocols in place. It is a daily watch...and our utility department holds a high standard performance record for ensuring the safety of our drinking water. Last week's drop in water pressure at Summitt and West is an example...when they saw the drop, they identified the mechanical failure and moved quickly to repair (an inventory of parts is maintained as a precaution). But this highlighted a need for a full-scale system analysis of mechanics and protocol. We've been blessed with quality water and solid capacity/volume, but we determined reaction to leaks and mechanical failure must be partnered with more aggressive preventative action. Quality and dependable access **MUST** be constant. While only parts of the city were affected (it is always the higher elevated homes when it is a pumping problem), **we are moving to contract for an external comprehensive review**. We will keep you informed as we move to action. If you were not receiving the regular city updates through **Civic Ready** this past week, please go online and check your contact information. We are relying on this in times of emergency communication.

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Thinking ahead to holidays shared – the City will collaborate this year with the Business Alliance annual **HOLIDAZE** to be held on **Thursday, Dec. 2nd at 5 pm** with the 'strolling' among booths in front of the Tall Texan through to Bay Pharmacy. **The City Christmas Tree lighting ceremony**, along with hot cocoa/cookies and Santa will blend with the Wildflowers, HSBBA treats, and information about our community. It is a "Hallmark" moment for sure – and those new to our community will enjoy mingling with neighbors, City Staff, and Business providers as we kick off the celebration of the reason for the season! **Mark your calendars – more info will follow.**

It is impossible to head towards Thanksgiving without focusing on all we have for which to truly be thankful here in our Horseshoe Bay– a community of truly good people living life fully and counting the blessings of their family and friends – a special place we are proud to call home.

cc Cynthia Clinesmith, Mayor

City Website - www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov