

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

January 31, 2024

### Message from the Manager:

On January 15, we observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day and remembered the life, wisdom and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King's speeches, teachings and writings have had a major influence on my life and leadership style. If you have never read Dr. King's speeches and writings, I encourage you to take the time to check out a few. Like me, you may find them transformational in how you view the world.

One of the biggest issues we face in our world today is a lack of peacemakers. What we see mostly is angry vitriol, for which many excuses are used to justify how badly some treat others. Dr. King had this to say, *"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."* Pouring more darkness (anger, bitterness, harsh words, etc.) into darkness is unproductive. Why do we remember the story of the Hatfield and McCoy feud? Is it because the pain after pain they inflicted on each other brought about something of beauty? No, we remember that story for the death, tragedy, and suffering for both families. The only way we can effect positive change is through light. One way we display light is through our service to others.

I am thankful to serve with such a "bright" team! Serving in government we know often, when we encounter a citizen, we are already at a deficit with that individual. Take municipal court for example, they understand that those that come to their counter are not excited to be there. We control our response however, and we choose our attitude and to serve everyone well. Just this past week I got to read the many compliments that members of our team shared with each other during National Compliment Day. As I thought upon the life of Dr. King, the "light" found in your words to each other had a big impact on me. Here are just some examples of the words you shared, and the light shed:

*"Thank you for being such a caring and compassionate supervisor. Your drive and commitment to serving the community is truly inspiring."*

*"...always being willing to help no matter what it is. You look out for other departments and you don't get enough credit for that. You're an amazing team player!"*

*"You are a light – I adore your positivity, your humor, your empathy, and how well you work with people."*

*"Thank you so much! You are such a positive and motivational teammate, and it is an honor to work with you! Thank you and your HR team for the challenges that have empowered me to be a better version of myself each day."*

*"I would like to compliment all of you on your dedication to this community. You're an amazing team that works well together making sure that crime victims of Harker Heights receive justice. I'm in awe when I watch you go to work and I couldn't be more proud of each and every one of you!"*

*"I wanted to take a moment to thank you for all you do for the fur babies of Harker Heights. You are such a caring and compassionate person and the City is fortunate to have you in that position."*

*“I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know what a pleasure it is working with you. Your kindness resonates in your voice and you are such a sweet person. It is reassuring to know that every time I pick up the phone and need assistance, you are always more than willing to help.”*

*“Collectively your team supports every staff member and department to accomplish all tasks. Often times I have noticed that you all put others need before your own. Thank you for all that you do.”*

I am so proud of you all and the work you all put in everyday! You are a light to those we serve and to me as well. Through your service to others you are making a tangible difference in their lives. In a world that too often embraces darkness, thank you for being a lighthouse for us all!

David

*“No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## **General Updates:**

### **New Hires:**

Welcome to all our new hires:

Shelby Snyder hired for the position of Animal Services Officer on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Calla Hoffman hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
Ae’vah White hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
Sharronda Caston-Hill hired for the position of Building Official’s Secretary on January 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Blake Volk hired for the position of Parks Light Equipment Operator on January 8<sup>th</sup>.  
Brenda Hilton hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on January 12<sup>th</sup>.  
Jeremiah Quiroz hired for the position of Parks Light Equipment Operator on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Promotions:**

Congratulations to all those promoted:

Kathleen Ann Mascarenas was promoted to the position of Sergeant on January 6<sup>th</sup>.  
John Howell was promoted to the position of Sergeant on January 6<sup>th</sup>.  
Lonnie Clark was promoted to the position of Sergeant on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**January Kudos Award Winners:** Congratulations to Admin’s Ursula Paddie and to Public Work’s Mark Hyde for being our January Kudos Award Winners! Many more kudos to come in the new year!

**February Challenge:** Our February Challenge will be Random Acts of Kindness. More information will be coming from HR on this fun challenge!

**HH-N-GO:** The HH-N-GO bingo style challenge began on January 2. A new letter/number is pulled each week and there are specific things to do for that letter/number if you have it on your card. There is a game card for employees and one for citizens. The game helps us to get to know

our organization better and for our citizens it helps them get to know the City better. You can still get a card and play so contact HR if you want to play!

**January Challenge:** Good luck to the 12 teams competing in the January walking challenge! Results will be posted soon!

**Eclipse Open House:** We will offer an Eclipse Open House on Saturday, February 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Recreation Center. This will be a come and go for our citizens to discuss the total eclipse coming on Monday, April 8.

**Special Dances:** We will have a couple of dances coming in February. The first is the King and Princess Dance on Friday, February 2 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. This dance is open to fathers, uncles, grandparents, or anyone else special in a little girl's life. The second dance is the Family Dance and it is on February 3, from 3 to 6 p.m. Both dances will be held at the Activities Center.

**Outdoor & Science Expo:** The Outdoor & Science Expo is a free family-friendly event! Bring seeds for a seed swap, visit educational booths, bring a helmet for a bike rodeo, outdoor activities, crafts and more. The event is Saturday, February 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Recreation Center.

**HHPD Hostage Negotiations Team:** The HHPD Hostage Negotiations Team attended the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Crisis Negotiations Competition and placed 13<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Congrats to our Hostage Negotiations Team!

**Planning's Courtney Fye Wins Award:** Courtney Fye was awarded the Walker, Childers & Munns Member of the Year for the Bluebonnet Chapter of the ICC. Congrats Courtney!

**Planning Staff Elected to Bluebonnet Chapter of the ICC Board:** Planning and Development staff members were recently elected to the Bluebonnet Chapter ICC Board as follows: Richelle Otero – Secretary, Courtney Fye – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Alex McCoy – Director of Social Action, and Yvonne K. Spell – Treasurer.

**KISD Recognizes Blue Santa Program:** KISD put together an excellent video highlighting PD's Blue Santa program. The program provides new bikes to kids that are less fortunate. The video can be found at this link: <https://www.smore.com/5wsed#b1f8zgepeo>

### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Chelsea Jennings is Outstanding:** A citizen setting up a new water account this afternoon contacted Finance to compliment Finance's Chelsea Jennings for assisting him and his wife. The citizen stated that Chelsea was wonderful and went above and beyond during their exchange. He mentioned that supervisors are typically called upon to complain about an employee however he wanted to do the exact opposite and emphasize that Chelsea is an outstanding customer service clerk. Finance Director Ayesha Lealiee who spoke with the citizen agreed saying, "we thought so as well and plan to keep her for a while."

**FD Works Hard:** A citizen took to social media to thank our FD for their hard work on a recent home fire. The fire fighting team involved included: BC Ray Gandara, BC Matt Hogan, D/O

Kellie Mozek, Lt. Justin Lewis, Jason Moore, Lt. Anthony Combs, D/O Stuart Kiefer, Josh Larremore, Alyssa Schwindt, Ernesto Rodarte, Logan Green, Mark Mata, Lt. Justin Elliott, D/O Tanner Read, Sean Kampmeier, Lt. Rene Fernandez, Jordan Clopton, Zach Gauthier and Jeremy Albright.

**HR Gets BINGO:** A citizen wrote to thank HR for the HH-N-GO game. The citizen stated “I really appreciate you guys and think it's really awesome you're encouraging folks to get to know their community through this game!”

**Lt. McAfee Impresses:** PD received a phone call from a citizen involved in a traffic accident. She said Lieutenant McAfee responded to the call and she reached out to us to recognize him for his respectfulness and professionalism. She said he was very kind to her and she enjoyed their interaction even considering the circumstances.

**Clyde Hicks Takes the Initiative:** HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank Building Security Officer Clyde Hicks. She wrote, “Thank you so much for your help with the water that was leaking into my office on Tuesday. As soon as you walked in and noticed the leak, you took the initiative to get a ladder and bucket to get the water contained. Thank you for going above and beyond your duties and for all you do for the City.”

**Todd Maxon, Arno Stemmer, Jaime Davalos, Eric “Jack” Jackson and Davin Dick Thanked:** Public Works’ Todd Maxon, Arno Stemmer, Jaime Davalos, Eric “Jack” Jackson and Davin Dick were thanked for their work on a water leak on Mark Road. A citizen called to say thank you to all the crew who worked so hard to get the water back on for them on Mark Rd. She was extremely grateful for all the work done.

**Calvin Fleming Shows Integrity:** Planning Director Kristina Ramirez wrote to thank Code Officer II Calvin Fleming. Calvin noticed one of the City’s Purple Heart banners was blown off of a light pole. Calvin, who had already clocked out for the day, collected the banner and brought it in to City Hall so that it could be kept until it was reinstalled. Kristina wrote, “Your consistent willingness to do what is right when no one else is around highlights your integrity and commitment to quality service to our community.”

**Crystal Thomas is Creative:** HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank PD’s Crystal Thomas. Director Clay wrote, “I think it’s a great idea and I truly appreciate her creativity. If we can’t get a town hall type meeting, perhaps a City job fair using those ideas. Let’s make this happen!”

**Michelle Smart, Kelsey Coffman, Catharina Hoffman, Wilson Riley, Zully Reyes, Sherill Carillo and Susan Crawly Praised:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank several employees for their assistance with audit documentation. The employees included Michelle Smart, Kelsey Coffman, Catharina Hoffman, Wilson Riley, Zully Reyes, Sherill Carillo and Susan Crawly. Ayesha stated, “I just wanted each of you to know that the auditors told me how appreciative they were that we were so quick to respond to all their requests for “PBCs” or “documentation”. This turnaround is something that could not be accomplished without you. Thank you for your quick response to each time I’ve asked you to complete workpapers and/or provide additional documents. Just goes to show how your hard work is noticed everywhere. KUDOS LADIES!”

**Chief Shannon Stephens Goes Above and Beyond:** Planning Director Kristina Ramirez wrote to thank Chief Stephens for his help on a code enforcement matter. Chief Stephens observed a violation on his way to his home and stopped and documented the violation for Planning. Kristina wrote, “Thank you Chief for going above and beyond to assist in this case.”

**Finance Staff are Appreciated:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank Susan Crawley, Kelsey Coffman, Michelle Smart, and Sherill Carillo. Ayesha stated, “Thanks for all the work you guys are putting into the upcoming Budget Retreat. I know this is not a small feat and it is truly appreciated!”