

LETTER TO LEON VALLEY CITIZENS

From Mayor Chris Riley

June 7, 2024

CITY COUNCIL MEETING –June 4, 2024

The following are highlights of council actions from the June 4th council meeting, which began at 6:00 p.m.:

PRESENTATIONS

Preliminary Workshop to Discuss the FY 2025 Budget – City Manager Caldera presented an overview of the proposed budget for the General Fund. Under the draft budget, there is an operating deficit of over \$700,000. Estimates for employee health care costs, retirement and liability insurance are projected at high numbers, but should be lower once these costs are finalized. **Operating Revenues will be \$14,633,254** an increase over FY 24 of \$384,803. The tax rate proposed is the same as last year - \$0.484 cents per \$100 of valuation. This will increase ad valorem tax revenues by \$175,599 over FY 24. The annual tax increase for an average home valued at \$224,622 will be \$96.69. The increase is due to a higher valuation of the homes. Final tax numbers from Bexar County will not be finalized until the end of July. **Operating Expenditures are \$15,410,552.** This includes the addition of an Assistant Planning Director, a labor position in Public Works, a civilian Impound Lot position for 6 months, and increasing the fire department administrative position to full time. This budget also funds a Merit Pay increase of 2% for all employees who qualify, a Cost of Living increase of 3%, and longevity pay for all qualifying full-time city employees.

Another major expenditure is funding phase 2 of the Hike and Bike Trail at \$2,152,136 of which \$1.2 million is reimbursed from a TXDOT Metropolitan Planning Grant, with the city's portion at \$829,000 (engineering, environmental and 20% construction costs).

For FY 2025, the projected fund balance in the General Fund is \$2.901 million (capital reserve) and \$1 million in emergency for a total of \$3.901 million representing 3 months of operating income.

The Enterprise Fund, which funds water and sewer for the City, is currently operating at a deficit of \$72,333. Impact fees for new development and an increase in water rates will help offset this number.

The City Manager will meet with each council member to come to consensus on needed cuts to balance the budget. A second public budget workshop will be held on July 16th, with August 20th as the FY 25 Budget Public Hearing and formal budget adoption date. Formal adoption of the tax rate is scheduled for September 17, 2024.

Reallocation of Funds to Hire a Consultant to Conduct a Park Master Plan and Resurface Tennis and Basketball Courts – The city budgeted \$200,000 to replaster both pools this year, but the Council decided to close the Leon Valley Community Pool and keep the Forest Oaks pool open. There was not enough time to replaster the Forest Oaks pool. Public Works Director Mortiz requested the council to use some of the funds for the following: Hiring a consultant to revise the park master plan, which was done in-house in 2017 (\$56,000), resurface the tennis courts (\$21,500), and repaint the basketball court (\$15,000) at Rimkus Park. Ms. Moritz said having an updated park master plan developed by a consultant will increase our chances of receiving grants for the park. Councilor Bradshaw asked about making the tennis courts dual-purposed by adding pickle ball lines. Ms. Moritz said the US Tennis Association has a policy of not giving any grant money for pickle ball courts in conjunction with tennis courts! The remaining funds of \$107,500 will roll into the reserve fund (savings) at the end of the fiscal year.

Update of the 2024 July 4th Celebration – Theme: “Heroes of Independence: Honoring Our Military” Crystal Miranda, Community Relations Director summarized the schedule of events for this holiday:

- 7:30 am – 5K Pioneer Run sponsored by the Leon Valley Historical Society;
- 7:00 pm – Parade from DPS down Evers Road to Poss Road at the park;
- 7:30 pm – Welcome and National Anthem
- 7:45 pm - The band **Finding Friday** begins to entertain the crowd;
- 9:45 pm – High aerial firework display set to music;
- 10:30 pm – Finding Friday Finale

Outside food and drink are allowed. There are vendors who will provide food and drink for charge. There will be fencing around the fireworks section to protect citizens from fallout. Parking: Community and Conference Centers. There will also be a shuttle service from DPS, Leon Valley Elementary, and Bandera Bowl parking lots (no charge). There will be a number of road closures in the morning for the 5K run and during the parade. All Leon Valley residents will receive a postcard with the details.

Safety is a huge concern. Weather and overcrowding in the park may be a reason to cancel the celebration. Hope to see you and your family there!

REGULAR AGENDA

Sale of City Owned Property (19.614 acres of land at Samaritan Drive) to Samir Chehade was approved by City Council. The vote was 4-1. The developer will pay the city \$2 million dollars for the property, but the city will have to pay \$2.5 million dollars as its share of improving three roads in the area (Aids, Samaritan and William Rancher). The developer will bring back a plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission at the June 25th meeting to develop not only the city's land, but two other undeveloped properties next to it as R-6 garden homes with variances (smaller lots to build denser homes). It is estimated that 350 homes could be built in the area (50+ acres), which may have an impact on the existing R-1 Seneca West neighborhood. Many of the neighbors spoke against selling the property to the developer because the city will need to come up with \$500,000, which is not in the budget. Adding police and fire personnel to respond in this development was also a concern expressed. The city currently has 5 new developments underway (not including this development). It will take time for this new development to come to fruition. Leon Valley will be increasing its population by several thousand people with the new developments.

Discussion to Increase Fees for Plan Review, Curb Cut (driveways) and Sidewalks for residential and commercial properties. Roque Salinas, Economic Development Director pointed out that current fees do not cover the city's expenses. With all the new development coming into the city, staff recommended increase in these areas. These two ordinances will be amended at the July 16th council meeting on the consent agenda.

Resolutions appointing members to the following committees: Board of Adjustment, Citizens Police Advisory, Economic and Community Development Advisory, Library Advisory Board, Park Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission were approved. These appointments are commensurate with the Mayor's two year term. There are still openings on ALL of these committees, and we would LOVE your volunteer spirit. Thanks for your consideration. Volunteer form is found on the city's website.

Our next city council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 16th at 6:00 p.m. at city hall**. The meeting will include the second discussion on the FY 25 Budget. The Staff Utilization study (for which the city paid \$75,000) will be presented, recommending our staffing needs for police, fire and public works.

Correction: On the May 24th Letter to the Leon Valley Citizens, I incorrectly mentioned Pavona Estates as an R-6 Garden Home community. It is Pavona Place.

JUST A REMINDER

The Forest Oaks Pool at 6620 Evers Road is opening for the summer on Saturday, June 8th from Noon – 8 pm, with adult swimming from 10 am – Noon through September 2nd. The pool will be closed every Wednesday. For more information on pool hours and rates, please visit our website: <https://www.leonvalleytexas.gov/parksrec/page/leon-valley-pools>. Free swim days will be July 5th and August 2nd as well as Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day, September 2nd. San Antonio Pool Management will manage the pool this summer (www.sanantonio-pmg.com).

Watering Hours Times have changed to Mornings: 5 – 10 am and Evenings: 9 pm to midnight once a week (Stage 2) on your watering day depending on the last digit of your address. Thanks for doing your part to conserve water while experiencing this severe drought, and very hot days.

Please talk to your neighbors about having a neighborhood gathering for **National Night Out, October 1, 2024**. Part of community resilience is knowing your neighbors. More information will be forthcoming!

The annual Council retreat to discuss city goals and plans will be held on Saturday, July 13th at 9 am. Place to be determined. Please do not hesitate to call me or any councilmember if we can assist. We are here to serve.

Sincerely, Chris
(210) 618-2092