

CITY OF GREY FOREST

from the Mayor's desk ...



OCTOBER 2018

Greetings,

It seems just like yesterday I was elected as your Mayor. Five months into my term, I wanted to let you know what has gone on thus far.

NEW CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

I had the privilege to interview a number of people to fill vacancies on City Council. I selected two of those I interviewed and nominated them to City Council for their subsequent approval:



Kimberly Verity to fill my old Council seat, Place 1, created when I assumed the position of Mayor. Kimberly has lived in Grey Forest for a number of years, has been a very active volunteer, a person of drive, business

experience, integrity, and a good heart. Recently, I sent her to grant writing training in order for the City to be able to apply for and obtain grants for road improvements. You may reach her at kverity@greyforest-tx.gov.

Geri Poss, MD, raised on the Southside of San Antonio to fill the vacant Council Member seat, Place 3. Graduated from UTSA and obtained her medical degree from UTMB in Galveston, internship in El Paso to practice trauma medicine, residency at Christus San Rosa in San Antonio and is Board Certified in Family Medicine. In addition to her medical experience she has been involved in the founding of two medical



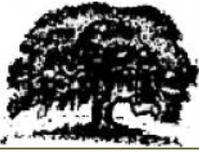
research companies. Geri has demonstrated successful logical sound judgement over the years, has business experience, and adds another angle of expertise to the Council. Since being appointed August 28th she has been busy coming up to speed on all the City activities, rules, policies, and laws. You may reach her at geriposs@greyforest-tx.gov.

GENERAL:

✓ We began the City's budget process in July. As the Mayor, I am the City's Budget Officer responsible for gathering the necessary information, creating a proposed budget, developing priorities and short/long term goals, presenting it to Council at a Budget Workshop (July 19th), followed by a Public Hearing (Sep 10th), and approval by Council on September 10th. We are in very good financial health with no debt. The FY 2019 Budget may be viewed on the City's website <http://greyforest-tx.gov/> at the end of October.

I believe one budget item warrants a special mention to alleviate any misunderstanding... Grey Forest tax rate remains the same as last year, but due to increasing property values property owners will see a small increase in the amount they pay in ad valorem taxes.

✓ In July, Moxie Pest Control and their attorneys attempted to intimidate, through legal action, the Mayor and Council into suspending Ordinance 24A Solicitations. This ordinance places restrictions on Solicitors so you are not inconvenienced or bothered. The Council, with valuable assistance from City Attorney Ryan Henry, rather than folding to Moxie Pest Control's demands rewrote the ordinance making the ordinance stronger. The objective was to protect the citizens from



unwanted solicitors knocking on doors and wandering the streets. Per US Supreme Court rulings, we cannot enact a blanket “no solicitation” ordinance but we can control solicitations, which the new Ordinance No. 24B does. But, you may insure your privacy even more by contacting the City Secretary to request your name be placed on the City’s “**Do not solicit list**” and/or by placing a “No Soliciting,” “Solicitors Prohibited,” or “No Trespassing” sign at the entrance of your property or by the front door. Should you do either or both of these actions and have a solicitor knock on your door, a simple phone call to the Grey Forest Police non-emergency number (210) 684-1011 reporting the activity is all you need to do. Please do not attempt to engage the solicitor yourself. Moxie has not come back since the new improved solicitation ordinance was put in place!

✓ **We need your email address!** Beginning in January 2019, the City will be using email, rather than “snail” mail, as the primary means of providing information and notices to its citizens. The reasons for the change are cost, efficiency, and the ability to provide more timely information. Sending out a simple post card costs the City approximately \$200. Additionally, providing the City your email address allows us to communicate with you during an emergency such as flooding or fire. There are some people who do not have an email address. It is important for the City to know who you are so the City, in an emergency, knows it should physically check on you to insure your safety. So, please provide the City Secretary your email address by either calling (210) 695-3261 or emailing slkinsley@greyforest-tx.gov. Should you “not” have an email address, please inform the City Secretary of that fact and the US Postal Service will be continued. Lastly, while you are providing the City Secretary with your email address it would be beneficial for the City to know you primary (cell or home) phone number.

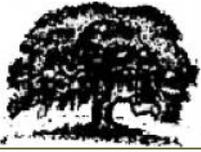
✓ **Be a good neighbor!** We are having an increase in the number of complaints about constant dog barking and relieving themselves on streets, driveways, and yards without the deposit being picked up. While you love your dog, your neighbors don’t necessarily feel the same way. Your neighbor should be able to be in their own yard without having to endure a dog barking at them constantly...nor should they have to clean up their property after your dog visited.

✓ I have started exploring various agencies to see if they have programs which would be beneficial to our City and its residents. (See the attached **Community Resources Utility Assistance** sheet.) This is a program administered by Bexar County Economic & Community Development to provide energy assistance should you qualify. If you believe you qualify, simply follow the directions on the attached sheet to apply for this assistance. Please do not call City Hall, because the City does not administer this program.

✓ Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has presented Grey Forest Water System the 2018 “Outstanding Public Drinking Water System” award. For a number of years our water system has been designated “Superior” which is one step below “Outstanding.” Fewer than one-percent of Texas public water systems receive the “Outstanding” designation! A special thanks to Grey Forest Utilities management and staff who are vigilant in their efforts to meet some of the most exacting criteria in water quality, testing, and planning. Visit the TCEQ website for more information on the Outstanding Public Water System designation... <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/recognition/outstanding.html>.

CITY ADMINISTRATION:

In May, upon being elected Mayor, I conducted an assessment of the City’s property, physical plant, administrative functions/procedures,



technology, and staff with an eye towards improving efficiency and effectiveness of the various departments and to maintain compliance with Federal, State, and County rules, regulations, and laws.

In August, I attended the Texas Municipal League Newly Elected Official training. One item which really struck me was during each Texas Legislative Session 30% of the laws passed directly impact Texas cities. These new laws place additional administrative burdens on cities. Our City Secretary has been with us for 12 years. For argument sake, if there were 100 Texas laws she had to deal with when she first joined us 12 years ago, and the Texas Legislature passed 20 new laws every two years, she now has to deal with 136 laws. This is a 36% increase not counting Federal laws added.

We have been fortunate to have our City Secretary, Shannan Kinsley, who over the years has dealt with this increasing workload without complaint, but we have now reached a point where no matter who you are it is simply impossible to keep up with the tsunami of legislation. Additionally, during this time we have added Madla Park, had an increase of police and public works positions, and assumed ownership of Scenic Loop Playground Club property all which has come with increased demands on the City’s administrative arm. Lastly, we face a major risk should our one and only administrator (City Secretary) resign or be unable to work. So with Council’s approval in the FY 2019 budget, a part time Assistant to the City Secretary position was created to reduce risk to the City and handle the required work.

Going along with the new position of Assistant to the City Secretary, the City Secretary’s computer is 12 years old and needs to be updated. It is painfully slow. So beginning October 17th through October 22nd, City Hall Administrative

office will be undergoing some reorganization of furniture and technology upgrades.

PUBLIC WORKS:

During my assessment referenced above, it came to my attention the Public Works Building/Area did not have water nor electricity; tough to clean and maintain equipment without both. Plus, equipment had no place to be stored out of the Texas sun which as you know is not friendly to tires, hydraulic lines, etc. Now, I am happy to report we have shelters over the equipment and water on site. In the very near future, we will have electricity in place.

Bubba Rutledge, brutledge@greyforest-tx.gov, the former Grey Forest Police Chief, returned from Tennessee where he had attempted to retire, but you know how grandmas are. Grandma wanted to be near the grandkids. The grandkids are here in Texas. So prior to me assuming office, Mayor Ron Reinhard convinced Bubba to temporarily assume the vacant position of Director of Public Works. We’re happy to report he has agreed to stay on as a part-timer!



We now have hired a permanent Director of Public Works, Jay Shipley, who will begin October 1st. Jay comes to us from Helotes Public Works thanks to Helotes Mayor Tom Schoolcraft graciously releasing Jay from his duties there. So as you see Jay about please reach out to him and make him welcome.





POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Our police under Chief Bejar, dbejar@greyforest-tx.gov, continue to issue tickets for unauthorized vehicle through traffic and speeding resulting in continued historically high fines which translates into income for the City.



Recently, during a routine traffic stop for expired registration a suspect attempted to evade being apprehended. This resulted in the

suspect being stopped at Grey Moss Inn where the suspect attempted to dispose of a stolen handgun. Helotes PD backed up our officer. The down side of such an arrest is it took our officer off his patrol duties for the better part of half a day while he completed the required post arrest paperwork.

The Cities of Grey Forest and Helotes police departments back each other up should it be required. Recently, Grey Forest backed up Helotes during an attempted felony at the new Shell station which resulted in a pursuit and apprehension by our officer.

Please feel free to report any suspicious activity to the Dispatcher for the quickest response. You may contact the Dispatcher at: Emergency 911, non-emergency (210) 684-1011, or routine information (210) 695-3261, ext. 3 or 4. (Any delay in reporting suspicious activity could result in a less effective response.)

If you witness what you believe is an illegal activity please do not attempt to intervene; you could be placing yourself at risk. Report it!

MUNICIPAL COURT:

Belinda McCall, Municipal Court Clerk, bfmccall@greyforest-tx.gov, has more work thanks to the increase in the number of citations issued by the Grey Forest Police.

This department will also be involved in the future reorganization and technology upgrades taking place October 17th through October 22nd.

MADLA PARK:

The Senator Frank Madla, Jr. Park Conservancy is expecting to hold their annual fund raising event on Sunday, March 24, 2019. From personal past experience, it is a fun and informative event. I strongly encourage you to attend. More details will follow.

The importance of the Senator Frank Madla, Jr. Park Conservancy fund raising efforts to the City is: the funds raised pay for the operations and maintenance of one of our City Parks.

COMMUNITY BOARD:

Mark your calendars for some fun times; an opportunity to put down the TV remote and meet a neighbor. More information to come about upcoming Community Events:

October 27th – Halloween

November 11th – Fall Festival/Veteran Recognition

December 8th – Holiday Caroling & Santa

January 12th – Twelfth Night

April 13th – Easter Egg Hunt

In conclusion, I think we are off to an excellent start. We have developed our plan and are now working our plan. There is more to do and as time and resources are available...we will get to them.

Sincerely,

Phillip A. Howard
Mayor, Grey Forest, TX
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