

LETTER TO LEON VALLEY CITIZENS
From Mayor Chris Riley
March 21, 2025

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LEON VALLEY THIS WEEKEND?

Saturday, March 22nd @9 am to 2 pm the 26th Annual **LOS LEONES ART FESTIVAL** at John Marshall High School (Eckert and Lobo Lane). Student Art for Sale, Entertainment from NISD Schools, Food and Games. Free Admission.

Sunday, March 23rd from 1-4 pm – **HARRIET ONION'S BIRTHDAY PARTY** @ the Huebner-Onion Homestead & Stagecoach Stop, 6613 Bandera Road. A free Family-Friendly Open House with free cake and paletas (while they last). Games. Crafts, and Stories for the Kids. Come look inside the Homestead and Grounds. Parking at Leon Valley City Hall with assistance at the crosswalk with a Peace Office.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING –March 18, 2025

The following are highlights of council actions from the March 18th council meeting which began at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to Albert San Miguel for 39 years of service to the City of Leon Valley's Water Company, as Foreman since 2007. A Proclamation and Water Drop Sculpture was presented to Albert. Ms. Moritz, Public Works Director praised Albert for his dedicated service. He was always available, day or night, to repair emergency water issues. He will be missed.

DISCUSSION ON AMI WATER METER SYSTEMS by Performance Services. The overall value of AMI meters was discussed. With AMI meters, homeowners can monitor their water usage and detect leaks. Since these meters are electronic, the City would realize savings from not having employees going out in the field to read the meters prior to billing. The initial cost of \$36,000 would be needed to conduct an investment grade audit (only a preliminary audit was performed). This would let the Council

know the total cost of the system. Director Moritz estimated a \$1.2 million figure. The Council decided to pursue replacing water and sewer pipes and the costs associated with this infrastructure improvement before considering adding AMI meters to the current Leon Valley Water Company customers' bills.

DISCUSSION ON SAFETY CAMERAS - Chief Gonzalez has applied for a grant to secure partial funding for 14 security cameras which would be placed in the City's entry and exit points. Chief reports these cameras would primarily be used as an investigation tool for the city's detectives. The grant, if received, is for \$53,000, with the City's responsibility of \$47,000., plus annual fees. If the City receives this grant, it will come back to the Council for further action. Chief Gonzalez stated adding 14 cameras is like adding 14 police officers to his force.

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE HUEBNER CREEK EROSION CONTROL PROJECT – Several of the councilmembers, including myself, had additional questions on the \$7 million erosion control project voted upon by Council last November. These included why more heritage trees were being cut down; why the cost had doubled; and what SAWS' contribution would be towards fixing the erosion damage caused by their recycled waterline. It was recently learned from Bexar County that a community block grant for historical preservation may be available to help with the cost. Additionally, San Antonio River Authority, which did work on this creek problem 5 years ago, expressed interest in re-looking at this issue. The Council voted 2-2 on how to proceed; I was able to break the tie to proceed with meeting these potential new partners to explore options.

DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED CAPITAL PLANS FOR FY 2026 – Dr. Caldera presented the staff's wish list of capital items from the General Fund, totaling \$3 million. The total unassigned General Fund balance is \$5 million. In the Enterprise Fund (Water Company), the capital needs total \$1.3 million (\$1 million is for annual replacement of water and sewer mains). Community capital needs total \$235,000 and the Forfeiture fund capital budget request is \$139,999 (police vehicles). Additionally, the manager showed 10 year plans for capital needs in all of the above funds so that Council can see the long term financial costs. An example is three ambulances are scheduled to be replaced between FY 27-28 and FY 29-30 for an average cost of \$400,000 per ambulance. The manager requested

the council's feedback on what was a priority purchase and/or what could wait to be purchased in a future budget cycle.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2025 JULY 4TH CELEBRATION – After last year's event, Council directed the City Manager to eliminate the 4th of July parade and focus on an evening event. The following is a schedule of events: **Food Trucks** – 6 – 9 pm; **Opening Band** – 6:30 – 7:30 pm (to be determined). It was suggested that staff find a Jazz band to play; **Finding Friday, main entertainment:** 7:30 – 10 pm; **Fireworks** will be from 9:30 – 9:45 pm, with **Finding Friday** finale from 9:45 – 10 pm. Last year's cost was \$141,140, but Director Miranda said this year's costs are increasing. An example was the fireworks. They are imported from China and may cost more due to possible tariffs. There will also be a kid's zone and participants are allowed to bring in coolers, as well as chairs and blankets. The Council also decided to forego mailing a postcard to each household this year. **Please note:** The Leon Valley Historical Society 4th of July Firecracker 5K Run and Walk will take place on July 4th starting at 7:30 am at the Northwest Little League. More information will be forthcoming on all these events.

PRESENTATION ON THE 2025 SWIMMING POOL SEASON SCHEDULE – Forest Oaks Pool located at 6620 Evers Road will open Memorial Day weekend (May 24-26th) through Labor Day, September 1st. Thereafter the pool will remain open, weekends only, from September 6th – 28th. San Antonio Pool Management will manage operations every day but Wednesdays, when the pool will be closed. Hours are 10 am to 8 pm. The Forest Oaks pool is available for party rentals (Community Croom (\$250 for 2 hours) and The Hill (\$100 for 2 hours). The city was notified there will **not** be a swim team this summer, as in the past. Season passes are available for residents (\$40 adult; \$30 child) and non-residents (\$100 adult; \$60 child) with no increase from last year. The daily gate fee remains \$5. There is an affordability rate for residents only (\$20 adult; \$15 child), which you must apply for. For the diehard swimmers, there will be a swim lane roped off again this season for members to swim laps. To purchase a membership, either go by city hall or go online at www.leonvalleytexas.gov. Go to Parks and Recreation, then Leon Valley Pools. It is not yet updated for the 2025 swim season.

REGULAR AGENDA

Council Unanimously Adopted the 2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan. A tremendous amount of work went into preparing this document, which was last updated in 2019. Special thanks to Ardurra Engineering which was hired as a consultant to oversee this process, as well as our City Manager Caldera, Public Works Director Moritz and Community Relations Director Miranda for their guidance and input. The Park Commission, let by Roger Christenson, served as the Steering Committee, and many citizens took the time to complete and return the survey, which responses were incorporated into the plan. With this updated Master Plan, it is our hope the City will become more eligible for grants to improve our park system. We are truly fortunate to have recreational areas within walking distance of so many neighborhoods in Leon Valley. Our citizens value nature and green space which adds to the overall quality of life in our community.

Council Approved a Variance for allowing a New-Off Premises (50 ft high) Billboard Sign on Bandera Road across from the Science and Technology School. It is a single-sided sign facing south on Bandera Road as cars drive north to IH410/1604.

Council Considered a Budget Adjustment in the amount of \$35,000 to Public Works for the Demolition of the Leon Valley Swimming Pool Facility on Poss Road. This item will be formally approved at the April 1st, 2025 council meeting on the consent agenda.

Our next city council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 beginning at 6:30** pm at city hall.

We are in a severe drought! This year, through March 20th, the area has only received 1.7 inches of rain. The average for the first three months of the year is 6 inches. Lack of rain is causing our trees to become stressed and increasing the chance of a fire. Please be careful of how you discard your cigarette butts, especially on days when we are experiencing 25 mph winds. Fire Chief Naughton says it only takes a spark to start a fire. Let's increase our awareness and keep our community safe. Thank you.

If we can assist you with any issue, please do not hesitate to contact me or any councilmember. Stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely, Chris
(210) 618-2092