



WEEKLY REPORT

APRIL 2, 2021

TO: MAYOR FLETCHER AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: BRYAN LANGLEY, CITY MANAGER

THE CITY OF
BURLESON
TEXAS

Weekly Report | April 2, 2021

I. Council Schedule

Meetings

Monday, April 5: City Council Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers. 141 W. Renfro St., 5 p.m. The meeting will be conducted in the council chambers and is also available via live stream, <https://www.burlesontx.com/watchlive>

Work Session Items/Report & Discussion Items

April 5

- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding improvements at Clark Park. (Staff Presenter: Jen Basham, Director of Parks & Recreation)
- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding upcoming city events, recreation programs, and COVID-19 protocol at the Burleson Recreation Center. (Staff Presenter: Jen Basham, Director of Parks & Recreation)
- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction on the City's response to the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) (Staff Presenter: K.T. Freeman, Fire Chief)

II. General Information and Status Updates

A. Passing of Victor Escapita, Hidden Creek Golf Course assistant superintendent

We are sad to share the loss of a 24-year Hidden Creek Golf Course employee. Victor Escapita passed away March 25, 2021, from complications of COVID-19.

"It's devastating," City Manager Bryan Langley said. "Victor was a wonderful employee and coworker. He took tremendous pride in his work at the course and is one of the reasons so many people get to enjoy this amenity."



Victor started at the golf course on March 1, 1997, and served as the course's assistant superintendent. He will be remembered for his kind and caring nature and his dedication to his job and his family.

"When I first got here 19 years ago, Victor was the first person to greet me," Golf Course Superintendent Lamar Byrd said. "He showed me everything I needed to know, made sure I felt welcomed, and would invite me to his family's gatherings."

"Victor was a great person, a fantastic employee, and an even better friend," stated Byrd. "He loved coming to work, he had lots of friends, the entire crew had great

respect for him. We knew that we could call him at any time, and he would be here to help. He will be deeply missed.”

“Our prayers are with his wife, Cathy, their children, his family and friends,” Langley said, “And we know our residents join us in offering our deepest condolences.”

B. Second round of splash pad surveys launched

The Parks and Recreation Department launched a second round of surveys this week seeking input for the upcoming splash pad design. This survey offers more in-depth questions about the four proposed designs and will remain open to submissions for the next two weeks. Once the final design has been approved, the splash pad will be installed next to the outdoor pool at the BRiCk. The survey can be found here,



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/burlesonsplashpad>

C. David Lopez named as new deputy director of parks and recreation

Join us in welcoming David Lopez to the Burleson community. Lopez, a certified park and recreation professional, was named parks and recreation deputy director.



Lopez has over 20 years of parks and recreation experience working with the City of Dallas and, most recently, the City of North Richland Hills. He began his duties on March 29, 2021.

“Selecting a deputy director for the parks and recreation department was an exciting challenge,” said Jen Basham, City of Burleson Parks and Recreation Director. “With our growing community, we were seeking a professional to assist with our vision of creating a diverse and innovative parks system. David stood out as the person to do just that. We are excited for him to join the parks and recreation family, and even more excited to take our parks to a higher degree of excellence.”

As the parks and recreation deputy director, Lopez will be responsible for overseeing parks, the cemetery, and capital projects.

"I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Burleson as their new deputy director of parks and recreation," said Lopez. "It is exciting to be a part of enhancing the community's quality of life as we implement the Parks Master Plan and build a dynamic future while preserving our rich history."

D. CARES Act Funding Update

The City of Burleson has received the outstanding balance of \$1,643,708 from Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM). Burleson was allocated \$2,553,595 as part of the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund and received an initial amount of \$909,887 with the remaining balance of \$1,643,708 to be reimbursed once required documentation and support of spending was submitted for review. Finance staff submitted the request for reimbursement in December 2021 to TDEM. TDEM completed their review on March 23, 2021, and funds were received on March 30, 2021.

E. Legislative Updates

In accordance with city council's state legislative program for the 87th Texas Legislature passed by resolution in January 2021, the below legislative actions have been taken:

- Staff drafted letters to the Ways & Means Committee and Burleson representatives to oppose House Bill (HB) 1869. HB 1869 would require taxes pledged to Certificates of Obligations (CO) to be payable from the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) portion of a city's tax rate. Currently, COs are payable from the Interest & Sinking Fund (Debt) portion of the tax rate. Staff feels this will result in increased costs to our taxpayers and cause delays in necessary public projects and infrastructure. The letters, signed by Mayor Fletcher, can be found starting on page 9. *The city council's legislative program states, "The city will oppose any initiatives that:...Erode the ability of a city to issue debt" which is what this proposed House Bill does.*
- City Manager Langley and Chief Cordell had a zoom meeting to discuss the child witness bill. We expect Chief Cordell to either testify or provide written testimony to state committees on this bill in the future. *This is consistent with city council's legislative program that states, "The city will support legislation that would:.....Impose a penalty enhancement in family violence cases where there is a child witness.*

Other bills we are watching:

- HB 5: Relating to the expansion of broadband services to certain areas
- SB 10: Relating to the use by a county or municipality of public money for lobbying activities
- HB 749: Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying activities
- SB 23: Relating to an election to approve a reduction or reallocation of funding or resources for a municipal or county law enforcement agency
- HB 1900: Relating to municipalities and counties that adopt budgets that defund law enforcement agencies

- HB 233: Relating to the applicability of the prohibition on governmental entities adopting certain regulations governing the use of certain building products, materials, or methods

F. Feel Good Friday

We love hearing stories about how meaningful parks programs are to participants, like this one from Cassie Havas and family about the woodshop program at Russell Farm Art Center.



“There is something special about Russell Farm. It is a place where the sun is always shining. I feel so fortunate to have found an amazing place for my son to learn life skills, work on woodshop projects and just be with new people.

This year has been challenging with the COVID isolation and the loss of some close family members. But, one thing that we look forward to every week is going to the farm. You would think for a 13-year-old that there would be other things of greater interest, but the farm is the highlight of each week for my son, Aidan. Lee has been such a great teacher and mentor and has filled a void in my son’s life after losing his best friend...his grandfather.

I believe that the legacy the original family wanted to leave behind with the farm is absolutely present. I hope that more people realize what a gift it is to have such a great experience for our children so close by. Thank you so much for all of the special memories and for ensuring that Russell Farm is a place where the sun is always shining.”

If you have a Feel Good Friday story you’d like us to share, [send us an email.](#)

G. SH 174/Wilshire Boulevard Median Beautification Project

The City of Burleson will soon begin work to beautify SH-174/Wilshire Boulevard corridor through the city within the medians from I-35W to John Jones Drive. A bid for trees, shrubs, groundcover plantings, hardscape improvements and a complete drip point source irrigation system was awarded in December 2020 to Green Scaping, LP after a public bid process. The city is beginning work in April to coincide with the spring planting season.



Construction is scheduled to begin the week of Monday, April 12. Motorists will see various inside lane closures over the next three months as the project is completed.

To mitigate traffic congestion, a phased construction plan will be implemented where only one median will be under construction at a time. The inside lanes near the medians are projected only to be closed from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in order to have all lanes open for peak morning and evening commutes. Electronic message boards will be placed along SH 174/Wilshire Boulevard to notify the public which sections of the road will be closed. The improvements are expected to be completed mid-Summer.

Background:

TxDOT constructed the widening of SH-174/Wilshire Boulevard in 2014. Over the past several years, the original landscaping encountered several problems, including diseased plants and damage to the irrigation system from traffic.

The project cost is \$381,429.18 and is funded from the 4B Bond Fund generated by local sales tax that is remitted to the Burleson Community Services Development Corporation 4B Special Revenue Fund. This project does not affect the property tax rate in any way.

H. Moontower Pizza Bar to be featured on The Texas Bucket List TV series

The Texas Bucket List features tales of the Lone Star State. Hosted by Shane McAuliffe, the show sets out to add more people, places, food and music to a list that every Texan should experience. Moontower Pizza Bar is featured alongside two other stops – Padre Island Brewery in South Padre Island and Seismique in Houston.



Moontower Pizza Bar will be featured this Sunday, April 4 at 10 a.m. on KXAS NBC.

I. City’s emergency management system notification update

Everbridge is the system the city of Burleson utilizes to alert the public in an emergency. As spring approaches and we begin to experience more thunderstorms, some residents may begin receiving notifications via phone, text, or email from the system. The communications department shared information on how to edit what notifications are receive and during what times via a news release on the city’s website, through the weekly e-newsletter and on social media. Read more at:

<https://www.burlesontx.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1558>

J. Easter Events

Parks and Recreation hosted two Easter events on Saturday, March 27. Easter Egg Hunt at Russell Farm and the Aqua Egg Hunt at the BRiCk were both a success. View all of the photos on the [city's Flickr account](#).



III. Upcoming Road Construction/Closures

UPCOMING ROAD CONSTRUCTION / CLOSURES			
Projects & Limits	Current Status	Traffic Affected	Estimated Completion
Turkey Peak Ground Storage Tank Construction & Brushy Mound Tank Demolition at existing City Facilities	General Contractor is at both Turkey Peak and Brushy Mound Sites.	Intermittent construction traffic to and from both sites. Anticipated Routes include: NW Renfro, SW Brushy Mound Rd, SW Alsbury Blvd, NW Summercrest Blvd, Nicole Dr & NW Jayellen Ave.	Fall 2021
Traffic Signal at Hidden Vistas / Hidden Creek Parkway Intersection	Traffic Signal installation complete and fully-functional.	None anticipated	April 2021
Fire Station #16	Work on building at finish-out stage.	None anticipated	
Elk Drive Pedestrian Mobility	Work underway. Awaiting handrail delivery.	None anticipated	May 2021
Irene/Gardens Safe Routes to School	Construction underway	Outside lanes of Gardens, Irene, Gregory & Johnson Ave will be closed in areas of construction. Closures to move with construction progress	November 2021

SH174 (Wilshire) Landscape Enhancements	Construction scheduled to begin week of April 12. Flashing message boards are in place.	Construction will require temporary daytime lane closures as necessary. These closures will only affect the inside lanes. Remaining lanes, including left turn lanes will remain open at all times.	July 2021
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IV. Events

- **Bunny Daze**
April 3, 12 - 3 p.m. at Chisenhall Fields
- **National Walking Day**
April 7, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the BRiCk
- **Spring 2021 Trash-Off**
April 10, 9 – 11 a.m., Citywide
Materials drive-through pickup, 9 a.m. at Warren Park
- **Far Out Family Campout**
April 10 – 11, 1 p.m. - 8 a.m. at Bailey Lake
- **Vietnam Veterans Celebration**
April 10, 2 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Plaza
- **BRiCk Open House**
April 26, All day event starting at 8 a.m. at the BRiCk

V. Attachments

- Legislative Update.....p. 9

March 23, 2021

The Honorable DeWayne Burns
115 S. Main Street
Suite 202
Cleburne, TX 76033

RE: House Bill 1869

Dear Representative Burns:

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on this important legislation.

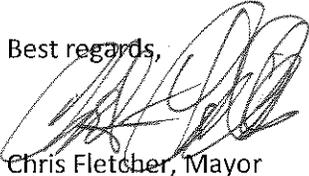
The City of Burleson opposes House Bill (HB) 1869 because it will result in increased cost to our taxpayers and cause delays in necessary public projects and infrastructure. HB 1869 would require taxes pledged to Certificates of Obligations (CO) to be payable from the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) portion of a city's tax rate. Currently, COs are payable from the Interest & Sinking Fund (Debt) portion of the tax rate.

As you are aware, as a result of SB 2 adopted in 2019, a city's M&O tax rate is now subject to a hard 3.5% cap. If COs are now required to be paid from this limited M&O tax rate, cities would be required to reduce other important services to the citizens, such as public safety. Additionally, the bond ratings for cities would be adversely impacted by such legislation, and these lower bond ratings would translate into increased costs for citizens.

Many cities, including Burleson, also finance important utility projects by issuing COs. The debt is paid by water and sewer customers, but it also includes a tax pledge as well to provide additional assurance for the bond holders. By doing so, the city is able to significantly reduce interest that is paid by our citizens. As written, HB 1869 would eliminate this practice, and as a result, revenue bonds would instead need to be issued. These bonds carry a substantially higher interest rate, as well as other restrictions. These costs would then be passed to our residents in the form of higher utility fees.

Due to the above issues, I urge you to reconsider the legislation proposed in HB 1869. If you have any questions, I would be glad to provide any additional information that you feel would be helpful. I appreciate your consideration of my comments and thank you for your service to the great state of Texas.

Best regards,



Chris Fletcher, Mayor
City of Burleson

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Brian Birdwell
PO Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

RE: House Bill 1869

Dear Senator Birdwell:

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City of Burleson

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Beverly Powell
PO Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

RE: House Bill 1869

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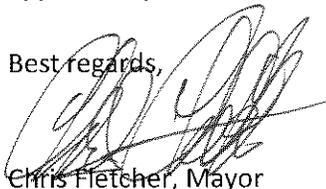
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Chris Fletcher, Mayor
City of Burleson

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Morgan Meyer, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
PO Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768-2910

RE: House Bill 1869

Dear Chairman Meyer:

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on this important legislation that is before your committee.

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