

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

December 26, 2023

Message from the Manager:

You all write the best service messages! I greatly enjoyed getting to honor you all for your service! Make sure you spend some time goal setting for 2024 – it is going to be the best one yet!

Service Pins:

Ayesha Lealiice – Finance - 20 Years
Sonja Clay— Police Department - 20 Years
Betty Delong – Fire Department - 20 Years
Betiale Hawkins—Police Department - 15 Years
Cesar Valdez—Police Department - 15 Years
Jacob Cardona – Fire Department - 15 Years
Michael Licavoli – Fire Department - 15 Years
William Greenwood – Police Department - 10 Years
Jeffrey Achee – Parks Department - 10 Years
Adam Trujillo—Parks Department - 5 Years
David McCoy- Code Enforcement - 5 Years
Zachary Gauthier – Fire Department - 5 Years

Finance Achievements: Finance received notification of receiving GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022. It is the 29th award for the City.

Police Department New Hires:

Madison Covington-Telecommunicator
Melanie Ross- Telecommunicator (*new employee*) (was not at the last ceremony)

Police Department Promotions:

William Greenwood
Sara Brockman

Police Department Achievements:

- Andrew Barnstable and Matthew Enos were praised for assisting a soldier who was in distress.
- Desiraye Torres for being awarded the rising star recipient in her vision XXI class.

Parks New Hires:

Nathan Menjares-- Light Equipment Operator

Parks Promotions:

Duston Wilson -- Crew Leader

Pet Adoption Center New Hires:

Miranda Jones-- Part Time Receptionist
Kayla Seymour --Vet Technician
Jessica McCoy --Animal Services Officer

Pet Adoption Center Promotions:

Johnny Widener-- Pet Adoption Center Supervisor

Planning New Hires:

Richelle Otero- Planning and Development Administrative Assistant

Planning Promotions:

Calvin Fleming-- Code Enforcement Officer II
Courtney Fye -- Plans Examiner
Fabian Brooks – Code Enforcement Officer

Planning Achievements:

- Calvin Fleming received the Code Officer of the Year from the Building Officials Association of Texas
- Michael Beard was elected President of the Building Officials Association of Texas

Fire New Hires:

Joshuah Larremore – Firefighter/EMT
Sean Kampmeier -- Firefighter/EMT
William Mahlstedt-- Assistant Fire Chief- Fire Marshal

Fire Promotions:

Aaron Dunnam -- Assistant Fire Chief – Operations
John Fussell - Driver/Pump Operator

Library New Hires:

Haley Mae Alcorn-- Library Clerk
Jazmyne Lee-- Library Clerk

Library Promotions:

Tamara Williams-- Part Time Library Clerk
Patrick Morris-- Part Time Library Clerk
Heather Heilman-- Reference Librarian

Public Works New Hires:

Solomo Khu-- Wastewater Maintenance Technician

Zyjuan Reaves-- Water Service Worker
Michael Moreno-- Water Maintenance Technician
Kendell Jones - Mechanic

Administration Promotions:

Wilson Riley -- Human Resources Specialist

Administration Achievements:

- The City of was recognized at the Texas Municipal League (TML) Annual Conference as one of three finalists for a 2023 Municipal Excellence Award in communication programs for cities over 25,000 in population. The recognition was for the volunteer concierge service at City Hall.
- HIREVets Gold Medallion award from the US Department of Labor.
- Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Veterans Commission for the City's participation in the "We Hire Vets" program. Mayor Blomquist received the award certificate

Courts New Hires:

Dorcas Sappor-Kabutey – Deputy Court Clerk

Courts Promotions:

Aaliyah Smith-- Deputy Court Clerk
Angela Lloyd-- Juvenile Case Manager/Teen Court Coordinator

Courts Achievements:

Andrea Contreras obtains Level II Clerk Certification
April Edwards obtains Level I Clerk Certification

Star Awards:

1. **The Kitten Caboodle Award** – to the person who is most purrfect for the job! Victoria Ellis, Kennel Technician
2. **The Pug Life Award** - to the person who is most confident and cool! Ethan Phillips, Animal Services Officer
3. **The Book Club Award**- Makes the best book recommendations! Melissa Wolfe, Sergeant
4. **The Behind the Scenes Award**– They don't really enjoy the limelight, but their great work makes it possible for everything to go smoothly for everyone else. Ursula Paddie, Assistant City Secretary
5. **Gordon Ramsay Award** - Most likely to have a lunch you want to try! Jay Leach, Lieutenant
6. **The Incredible, Uncanny, Amazing Comic Book Guy Award** - For tackling the superhuman feat of taming the graphic novels section with dynamic wit and astonishing

organizational skills. All this he did without hurting any bystanders! Patrick Morris, Part time Library Clerk

7. **The Brew Master Award-** For always thinking of her coworkers and anticipating their needs. Everyone appreciates that person who always starts the coffee maker when the pot is empty. Sherill Carillo, Payroll Specialist
8. **The Most Morning Person -** No matter the day, this person arrives at work bright-eyed and ready for the day. Chelsea Jennings, Customer Service Clerk
9. **“Where’s the Remote” Award** – Most Likely to Work Remotely (From Inside the Building) Kailie Gomez, Outdoor Programs Coordinator
10. **“Squirrel!” Award**– Greatest Stash of Stuff (both Useful and Not) Nichole Broemer, Rec Center & Senior Programs Manager
11. **Customer First Award**– Always thinking about how the customers might feel. She keeps the customers happy and content. Melissa Duenas, Deputy Court Clerk

Employee of the 3rd Quarter – Desiraye Torres:

The “Employee of the Quarter” committee met yesterday and offered suggestions for the City of Harker Heights’ Employee of the Quarter nomination. I am honored to announce that the committee has selected DESIRAYE TORRES as this quarter’s recipient of this much sought-after distinction. Following a short deliberation, the committee members believed Desiraye Torres to be a deserving awardee for the following reasons: Desiraye is assigned to our Healthy Homes division as the Youth Specialist. She has excelled in this position and has taken on any task that she is given, from designing brochures to organizing events for the community. She has come a long way; she started out as our PSO and was promoted to this position last year. Desiraye has embraced her new role within this organization, and even though she has only held this position for about a year, she has already put her mark on it. With her organizational and innovative skills, she has transformed this position to new heights. She appears unstoppable.

Employee of the 4th Quarter – Shiloh Wester:

We have unanimously chosen Shiloh Wester as the Employee of the Quarter. To “go above and beyond” is defined as to give extra effort, usually in a way that exceeds what is expected. Because of your compassionate spirit, your generous nature, and your unwavering support of the people and animals around you, you have certainly gone above and beyond! From literally taking “work” home to decompress from the shelter, to seeking rescues for those animals who need it the most, you have shown your coworkers and the community that you are indeed what the City of Harker Heights exemplifies. Animal welfare can be as bittersweet as it is rewarding, and can wear even the strongest person down, but you still put your heart and soul out there whenever possible. Every person who

meets you can truly see the love and compassion you have for animals and people alike. You balance coworkers, volunteers, and the public to ensure the smooth workings of the shelter, and you always offer your support and help when needed. Karen Davison once said, 'Saving one animal will not change the world, but surely for that animal, the world will change forever.' You have certainly changed many worlds by going above and beyond, and we are truly grateful for you!

David

“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.” —**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“The bad news is time flies. The good news is you’re the pilot.” —**Michael Altshuler**

General Updates:

New Hires:

Welcome to all our new hires:

Kendell Jones hired for the position of Mechanic on December 4th

Dorcas Sappor-Kabutey hired for the position of Deputy Court Clerk on December 4th

Ethan Gingerich hired for the position of Deputy Fire Marshal on December 5th

Terry Wilson hired for the position of Wastewater Maintenance Technician on December 11th

James Williams hired for the position of Wastewater Maintenance Technician on December 14th

Rodney Trantham hired for the position of Drainage Light Equipment Operator on December 14th

Darlene Prechtel hired for the position of Records Clerk on December 18th

Promotions:

Congratulations to all those promoted:

Jaime Davalos was promoted to Crew Leader on December 9th

December Kudos Award Winner: Congratulations to IT’s Josh DeLong as December’s Kudos Award Winner! Josh is such a great recourse on so many things for our organization! Thanks for a job well done Josh! Many more kudos to come in the new year!

January Challenge: Good luck to everyone who signed up to participate in the team walking challenge to begin our new year! Teams of three have been selected and the challenge calls for 30 miles to be logged per team during the month.

December Challenge: Congrats to all who participated in the 12 Days of Wellbeing! Winners were drawn from all who participated, and the following won prizes (the Mayor has resubmitted his prize for the next employee drawing):

1st place – Eunice Meyers, \$10 Starbucks gift card (Courtesy of Standard Insurance)

2nd place – Mayor Michael Blomquist, \$10 Bath & Body gift card (Courtesy of Standard Insurance)

3rd place – Sara Clark, Box of TX Pecan Pralines (Courtesy of Perry Office Plus)

HH-N-GO: A Harker Heights style bingo called HH-N-GO will begin in the new year. To get a HH-N-GO card contact HR. We have a card for employees and one for citizens. Each week a number will be drawn. If you have that number on your card then just complete the task on the card for that square, post a picture to social media of you completing the task with #teamheights and you can mark that square completed! Prizes will be awarded to HH-N-GO winners! The game is structured so that we all learn more about our City.

Healthy Homes Partners with Seton: The Healthy Homes Division partnered with Seton Medical Center Harker Heights for the 2nd Annual Giving Tree event. Together we were able to assist a total of 162 children with Christmas gifts. These families have faced challenging times this year and greatly appreciated receiving these gifts. Thank you to all those who assisted us in making this possible! I am so very proud of our Healthy Homes program for all it does to provide a greater net of service for our citizens.

Spotlight on Service:

PD's Community Services Impresses: Park's Casey Brazzil wrote to thank PD's Community Services for including Park's in the bike delivery to local schools. Casey wrote, "It was a great feeling to be a part of something that is way bigger than yourself. The smiles on the kids' faces was a feeling that you can't describe. Sgt. Quichocho. Of. Thomas, and Of. Parra did, and do, amazing things for our community. I am so thankful to have a work family that does great things. Thank you for letting us be a part of it."

HR Gives Speedy Service: A citizen wrote to thank HR for their speedy reply to the citizen's desire to participate in the City's HH-N-GO program.

Karry Fow, Lawrence Stewart and Sonja Clay Are Willing to Help: PD's Stephanie Hall wrote to express her thanks for Karry Fow, Lawrence Stewart and Sonja Clay for their assistance while she was away from work with the birth of her beautiful daughter. Stephanie wrote, "Ms. Karry Fow, Mr. Lawrence Stewart, and Deputy Chief Clay did a phenomenal job at keeping things moving smoothly here at the PD and specifically with things related to my job. I wouldn't have had such a smooth transition back into work if it wasn't for all three of them and their dedication to this department and willingness to help. Since I have returned, they have still been helping me tremendously while I get back into the swing of things, and I am extremely appreciative of all they have done and continue to do."

Mark Hyde, Eric Jackson, Antavious Collins, Davin Dick and Ben Becerril Make an Impression: A citizen wrote to express their thanks for the roadwork that was performed on their street. The citizen stated the work "looks excellent and is very smooth."

Fabian Brooks and David McCoy Thanked: Code Officers Fabian Brooks and David McCoy were recently thanked by a citizen for their good work. The officers were said to be very professional and were attentive to the citizen's concerns.

Josh Delong Gets a Kudos: IT's Josh Delong assisted Planning with creating a new logo. Yvonne Spell wrote to give Josh a kudos saying, "we love it, it looks outstanding."

Ursula Paddie's Efforts Noticed: Former Mayor Spencer Smith called to express some kind comments from a citizen about Admin's Ursula Paddie. Ursula assisted a citizen at the counter and the citizen was so impressed with the interaction.

Ryan Raben Helps Save a Life: Fire Chief Stephens wrote of his appreciation for PD Officer Ryan Raben. Chief Stephens stated, "our crews stated the officer's application of their tourniquet on the patient's arm was effective and did prevent massive blood loss. Keeping trauma patients hemodynamically stable is the key to survival in these incidents. The tourniquet application and your officer's efforts were the critical elements to a positive patient outcome."

Roxanne Harrill Keeps Us Safe: Park's Cassey Brazzil wrote to thank PD's Roxanne Harrill for assistance with traffic control. Casey stated, "I want to say a big Thank you to her for always being there for me. She is a true friend and a great asset to the city. She is the best. She made sure we were safe until we finished."

Lyndsey Amundson Makes It Special: I wrote to thank HR's Lyndsey Amundson for her great work preparing for our Employee Recognition Ceremony. What a great event and fun time spent together all due to Lyndsey's creative efforts!

Finance Staff Go the Extra Mile: Finance's Susan Crawly wrote to thank the entire Finance staff for helping to clean up after the Employee Recognition Ceremony. She stated, "you all exemplified true teamwork and kindness."

Mayor Blomquist, Councilmember Wilson, David Mitchell, Jerry Bark, Chief Hawkins, Leona Clay, Jeff Achee, Lisa Youngblood and Mark Hyde Welcome Family: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiee wrote to thank Mayor Blomquist, Councilmember Wilson, David Mitchell, Jerry Bark, Chief Hawkins, Leona Clay, Jeff Achee, Lisa Youngblood and Mark Hyde for welcoming her family at the Employee Recognition Ceremony. Ayesha wrote, "Thanks so much for making your introductions to my family yesterday. I was overjoyed having them with me so having each of you openly come to say hello made it even more special for me. It's truly the little things that can make someone's day and I wanted to let you know that it didn't go unnoticed. You all are part of the reason I enjoy being a part of #teamheights."

Sara Clark Assists: City Secretary Julie Helsham wrote to thank Sara Clark for staying late to take care of a package. Julie wrote, "Thank you for staying back afterhours on Friday, December 1st to ensure a very important package for the Public Works Department went out for delivery before the weekend. I appreciate your willingness to always assist wherever needed – keep up the good work!"

HR Acknowledged: Dee Stewart with The Texas Veterans Commission wrote to acknowledge the good work of our HR team. She wrote, "I wanted to take the time to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude for your support in assisting me with providing quality employment services to military spouses and family members throughout the year."

Johnny Widener and Ethan Phillips Rock: Citizens responded on Facebook over the story of a dog that had long evaded capture that the PAC's Johnny Widener and Ethan Phillips were able to safely capture. Many citizens responded expressing their appreciation for the officers and the PAC. One citizen even stated that PAC rocks!

FD Spreads Christmas Cheer: The Fire Department totally transformed how they do the Santa ride around the City this year. The City has received so many compliments on the new routes and the increased visibility of Santa in the neighborhoods. Change is never easy, but this change was borne of the desire by the FD to provide an even better experience for our citizens. I could not be prouder of their initiative to serve more!