 ***Town of Waco***

June 28, 2023

Greetings All,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Town Board members to provide updates on some of our on-going projects and to pass along other relevant information we wanted to share.

In June the Board passed their annual 2023-2024 budget with no increase in taxes. The Board is committed to continue our focus on updates and renovations to the Community Center and Town Hall. Renovations to the Community Center during the 2022-2023 fiscal year included the replacement of the exterior storm doors and adding a new range in the kitchen, and at the Town Hall we replaced the two doors on the back of the building with a more secure roll-up door. This year we will be reviewing quotes to update the kitchen in the Community Center and interior painting of the Town Hall.

The Board voted to continue with our plan to treat one town-maintained street yearly with sealcoating to help extend the life of the street by protecting it from oxidation, oil and other chemicals. We have had this process completed on A.W. Black St and Moss St. and we will be working with the contractor to choose a street to sealcoat on the North side of town this year. More on that to come.

We continue to address the appearance of the town by keeping the grass cut along the side streets, cutting back over grown vegetation, edging the sidewalks and addressing the CSX Railroad right-a-way. We were able to get the Putnam St. side of the right-of-way cut this spring and we will get to the Cherryville Rd. side as soon as we can. We realize this is an on-going issue. We continue to hear positive remarks on the overall appearance of the town and we take pride in how the town looks. We encourage each homeowner to work with us by focusing on their landscaping and lawn maintenance in a combined effort to keep Waco beautiful.

As of June 19th, we were unable to come to an agreement with Republic Services concerning our recycling fee rate for the 2023-2024 budget. The recycling fees we have been paying for each household have almost tripled since we first started our recycling program in 2016, therefore we have cancelled our recycling program with Republic Services effective July 31, 2023. Republic will be collecting the recycling bins following the last collection on Monday July 31st. We did speak with our account representative at Republic and inquired if they offered individual recycling and they do not offer it in our area. The closest Cleveland County Recycling Center is at 1609 Airport Rd. at the Landfill. We apologize for this inconvenience. Trash collection will not be affected and we will continue to provide one trash bin per residence at no cost to our citizens.

There is no new information from the NCDOT on the S. Main St. bridge replacement or on the widening of Cherryville Rd. project. We will pass along any new information as we get it.

One program we would really like to see is a “Farmers Market” in Waco. We have reached out to several local vendors but have not been able to get anything set up this year. If you know of anyone that might be interested in selling fresh fruits and vegetables at the Community Center one day a week, please get their information to us. We believe this business would do well and that the community would come out and support the sale of local farm fresh produce.

The new playground behind the Community Center has proven to be a big hit, and we are so pleased to see it being utilized daily. We have heard from so many of you and are pleased with the positive comments. We did get several request asking for some type of play equipment for smaller kids and we listened. The Board voted in June to add an additional 1150 sq. ft. of play area and we purchased a two-bay swing set and two swing-bounce riders for kids age 2-5. These items will be installed in early August. Our long-range vision is to add a 1/10-mile walking track, a picnic shelter with tables and charcoal grills to the area and we want to add additional play equipment for children of all abilities. We will proceed with this project when we secure the funding.

We are always looking for alternative funding for our projects. Over the past 6 years we have received $130,000.00 in grant money. Grants have provided the money needed to renovate the Community Center and Town Hall, purchase the new LED Christmas lights, repair and replace sidewalks and without grant funding, the playground would have remained just a plan on paper.

The Community Watch program is still active and growing. We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Community Center. The program has an active private Facebook group page where we share information, and for our non-Facebook crowd, we have an email group where we can share important news. Through the program we share relevant town and community information and members share tips about suspicious individuals and we post crime related information that the Sheriff’s Department shares. We encourage all citizens to get involved in the program and help us keep Waco and the community safe.

Following the success of last years “Neighborhood Block Party” the Community Watch program will be hosting this free event again on Saturday August 26th 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. This year’s event will offer “FREE” hotdogs, drinks, chips, snow cones and popcorn. We will have a bounce house with a water feature for the kids; the Fire Department will set up their “smoke house” and have free hand-outs on fire safety; we will set up bean bag toss games and the playground will be open. We are inviting the Sheriff’s Dept. to do a K-9 demonstration and we hope to have some type music playing throughout the day. Please mark this on your calendar and join us on August 26th for food and fun. Again, did I mention that everything’s “FREE”?

The Community Watch program is run by volunteers and operates on donations. Any help, either by volunteering your time or with a monetary donation, is appreciated.

Last year we introduced the “Waco Lights Up for Christmas” contest and want to thank everyone that took part in the festivities. The participation far exceeded our expectation. The top scoring homes were 5th Place 2333 Cherryville Rd. Betty Padgett; 4th Place 133 Moss St. Tracy Chichester; 3rd Place (tie) 416 Phillips Dr. Chester and Becky Haynes and 2604 Fallston-Waco Rd. Joey and Lori Barrett; 2nd Place 222 South Main St. Pat Darty and the winner was 2101 Cherryville Rd. Darrel and Amanda Vess. The 1st and 2nd place winners were awarded $250.00 and $150.00 respectively. Congratulations to all the Winners! The contest was such a success that we are going to do it again this year so start planning now!

This is an election year for us. “ALL” Board seats, along with the Mayor’s position, are on the ballot in November. Candidate filing at the Cleveland County Elections Board opens at 12:00 noon Friday July 7th and closes at 12:00 noon Friday July 21st. We strongly encourage every citizen to get involved in Waco politics. The Town Board meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall and the meeting is open to the public. We invite you to come to the Board meetings, get involved in the conversations and voice your opinions on town issues because you should have a voice in what happens in Waco. If you want to be a part of change, file to run for a seat on the Board. Every citizen should find their own way to be involved in Waco’s future.

Thank you for taking a moment to read this letter. You can reach us by email at [townofwaco@gmail.com](mailto:townofwaco@gmail.com) or from the Town of Waco Facebook page. We also update our website regularly. If you have not checked out our website ([www.townofwaco.com](http://www.townofwaco.com)) please do so and let us know what you think. Our monthly Community Watch meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Community Center. Our monthly Town Board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall and both meetings are open to the public. If you have any questions or comments, we would love to hear from you.

John Barrett, Mayor

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