

The City received the contract with the Lindale Volunteer Fire Department based upon our community's values provided by the Tax Office. Of course, there was a slight increase again this year in our overall values, so the cost of the contract went up as well. I proposed and the alderman agreed that the city would absorb this increase yet again, so that no fees are passed on to the residents for at least the second year in a row. The budget was approved and is posted to the City's webpage. As the city has no property or sales tax, our operating monies come from franchise fees paid to the city by utility companies. Each year the amount the city receives is less than the previous year. This is partly due to a decrease in use in utilities by residents. For example, ONCOR pays based upon the number of kilowatts our community uses. With the increased efficiency of lighting, air conditioning, and new home construction, the amount of electricity decreases. This results in a decrease in franchise fees. Same for the Suddenlink/Optimum fees we receive as people cut the cord and use other providers. So, as the City receives less funds but continues to cover more costs, the operating capital decreases over time. So, we will need to look at this closely in coming years.

Regarding the Fair Foundation Expansion proposal. I haven't said much about it overall as there has been no formal presentation or request made of the City at present. It's before the Club Board of Directors first, and if approved, will then be brought to the City for a de-annexation request of a portion of land on the East side that is frontage on 849. The General Manager has been making the rounds and doing presentations over this, and I encourage you to go listen. I would also like to hear from you about your thoughts. I'll share mine later when we have the proposal in front of us.

I called TxDOT regarding the street lighting on FM 16 where you turn to come to our back gate and have asked them to turn them on as it is really dark and difficult to see the turn.

ONCOR work continues with surveyors in preparation for tree cutting and line and pole improvements/upgrades to our community. They are connecting us to two power stations now, instead of just the one, so we should see a lessening of power outages.

And lastly, I spoke with the Smith County Elections director regarding the last city election. I noticed on social media that the thoughts were we had low voter turnout. Compared to a November election, May elections usually have less turnout. However, out of the eight entities that held elections on May 3, 2025, I'm proud to say Hideaway had the largest percentage of voter turnout in Smith County! 22% of eligible voters cast their ballots in the city election. Outside of Winona Texas with 16%, the other entities were in the single digits.

Enjoy the Fall weather, your pumpkin spice whatever, and our awesome democracy.

Chet Thomas, Mayor