

City Manager Update – 11/6/20

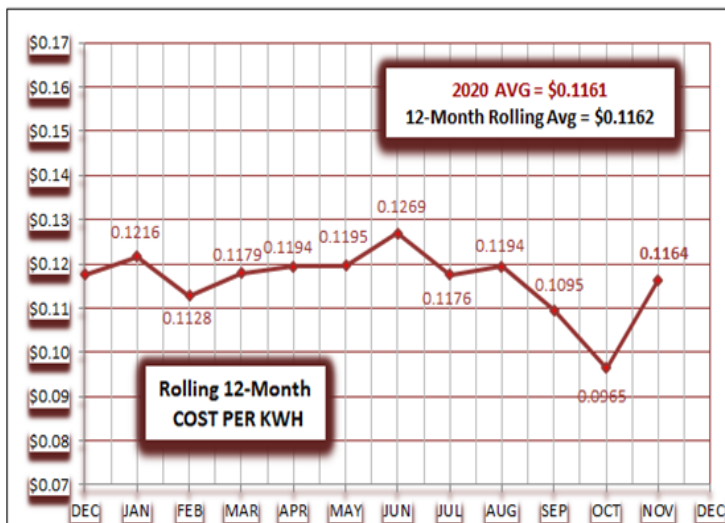
TGIF! Although I appreciated the extra hour of sleep, the time change has definitely messed with my circadian rhythm. I hope everyone took the opportunity to check / change the batteries in their smoke detectors before moving the clocks back an hour. It is hard to believe the Holiday Season is already upon us. As a reminder, City Hall will be closed Wednesday, November 11, 2020 in observance of **Veteran's Day** and Thursday, November 26, 2020 and Friday, November 27, 2020 for **Thanksgiving**. City Hall office hours during these weeks will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The 2020 General Election is finally over. Whether your presidential candidate gets elected or not, it's time for America to unite and support whomever the next elected Commander-In-Chief will be. Hopefully things will calm down in the next few weeks. Congratulations are in order for Joanna Morgan (Place 4) and Mayor Scott Saunders on their re-election to office and to our newly elected Councilmember - Janice Bruno (Place 5). Cassie Barrientos did not seek re-election and Jason Hewitt has resigned. Mike Kahanek (former Councilmember) has agreed to serve out Jason Hewitt's remaining term (Place 2) which expires in May 2021. Special thanks to Cassie Barrientos and Jason Hewitt for their service. Mayor Saunders and Council member(s) Morgan and Bruno will be sworn in during a **November 16, 2020** Special-Called Council meeting. Voter turnout in Bastrop County was 70.67% with 36,894 votes cast out of 52,203 registered voters. Click on the following link for more detailed voter turnout and election results → <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/TX/Bastrop/>

Here is a list of significant accomplishments, events, and activities since my last report:


- 1) Wastewater Rates - Three Month Winter Water Average Begins December 1st** - Wastewater rates in Smithville are set by using a three (3) month "winter" water use average between DECEMBER and FEBRUARY. You can reduce your monthly wastewater (sewer) bill by conserving water during these months. In the event that the monthly water usage for any month is less than the computed "winter water average," the lesser of the two shall be used as the basis for calculating the wastewater bill. Residential customers pay a \$10.50 sewer base rate per month and \$3.85 sewer fee per 1000 gallons of water used. Cut back on water use between December and February and let the savings begin! For a list of all utility rates in Smithville, click on the following link → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/city-departments/utilities/rates/>.
- 2) Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** - An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in NOVEMBER. LCRA fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon electric utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The LCRA fuel cost per kWh for November is \$0.06638. This represents a **42.91% INCREASE** in fuel cost compared to October's fuel cost of \$0.04650. Adding City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.06638 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during NOVEMBER will be \$0.1164 per kWh. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of Texas has published cold weather energy-savings tips → <https://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save.aspx>. Below you will find a "rolling" 12-month residential cost per kWh and a fuel cost comparison chart. On average, the cost per kWh for residential electric service in Smithville is between 11-12 cents.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh – NOVEMBER 2020



Note: LCRA Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor + City Distribution Fee* (\$0.0500) = Cost / kWh

*Residential Distribution Fee = \$0.500/kWh. Non-Resident (i.e., service outside city limit) Distribution Fee = \$0.650/kWh Effective October 1, 2019

	
2020 Cost / kW Hour	
January	0.1216
February	0.1128
March	0.1179
April	0.1194
May	0.1195
June	0.1269
July	0.1176
August	0.1194
September	0.1095
October	0.0965
November	0.1164
December	
Avg	0.1161

① LCRA F&PCRF = Fuel Cost
COS kWh Sold

② Fuel Cost + Dist. Rate
= Electric Rate

③ Electric Rate X kWh
Used =

Electric Bill

City Manager Update – 11/6/20 (Continued)

3) **St. David's Foundation Grant to Help Utility Customers with Accounts in Arrears** - The City of Smithville reinstated utility disconnects on November 3, 2020. Back in March, the decision was made that no utilities would be disconnected for nonpayment while a local disaster declaration was in effect due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the financial impact to the City is significant and we can no longer allow customers to remain in arrears. Approximately 70 utility customers with accounts greater than 120-days past due owe the City \$175,000. These customers were scheduled for disconnect due to non-payment. However, the City applied for a coronavirus relief grant from the St. David's Foundation to help customers pay down overdue accounts. Last week, the foundation notified Smithville that it awarded the City \$51,750 for distribution. To be eligible, customers with delinquent accounts must make payment arrangements with the City as a condition of receiving up to \$750 in utility payment assistance. Not all utility customers who owe back payments owe \$750 or more. For those that owe less, the remainder of the \$750 will be added back into a pool to help other customers who are behind on payments. For those that owe more than \$750, they are expected to agree to a 6-month payment plan with the city to settle the debt. I am pleased to report, sixty-four (64) out of sixty-nine (69) utility customers with delinquent accounts made arrangements with the City to settle their debt. The City Utility staff worked with customers to ensure they could commit to a reasonable payment plan for any remaining amount to help them from falling behind again. Combined Community Action and the Smithville Ministerial Alliance also provided relief to utility customers since the pandemic began.

There are several events / activities planned this weekend and the next few weeks in Smithville:

Keep Smithville Beautiful is hosting a **Fall Clean Sweep** on City and County roads **Saturday, November 7, 2020** starting at 10AM. Thanks to Ron Martin and Woody Raine for coordinating the project. Volunteers can sign up at the Chamber and receive all they need (gloves, bags, grabbers, safety vests, etc.) and directions. Thanks to everyone who is helping to Keep Smithville Beautiful!

The November **City Council Meeting** is scheduled for 6:00 pm **Monday, November 9, 2020** at City Hall. In-person attendance is limited to ten (10) citizens due to COVID-19. Masks and social distancing protocol will be enforced. The meeting will be "live-streamed" via YouTube.

City Hall will be closed **Wednesday, November 11, 2019** in observance of **Veteran's Day**. City Hall hours will be 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. VFW Post 1309 will be selling gun raffle tickets to help raise money for the VFW Building Fund. The drawing will be 11/29/2020. Raffle tickets are \$10.00 each or 6 for \$50.00 and you do not need to be present to win. The winners will be posted on Facebook. Contact Trish Kubena @512-581-2588 to purchase tickets.

The annual **Airing of the Quilts** will be held on **Saturday, November 14, 2020** from 10 am to 3 pm throughout the Central Business District. Some of the quilts on display will be for sale. Masks and social distancing protocol are mandatory.

There will be a **Special-Called City Council Meeting** at 6:00 pm **Monday, November 16, 2020** at City Hall to canvass the election and swear-in elected officials. In addition, city-appointed board members will be appointed / reappointed as their term coincides with the election of the Mayor. The Bastrop County Elections group notified the City that they were waiting on mail-in ballots from military personnel and that the election could not be official certified until 11/10/20. Hence, the reason for the Special-Called meeting. In-person attendance is limited to ten (10) citizens due to COVID-19. Masks and social distancing protocol are mandatory. The meeting will be "live-streamed" via YouTube.

The Smithville PD **Blue Santa Kick-Off Mixer** is scheduled for **Thursday, November 19, 2020** at First National Bank (312 Main Street) from 5pm-7pm. Indoor/Outdoor Come and Go Mixer, masks required. Cash/Check donations only. NOT TOYS PLEASE.

The First United Methodist Church (FUMC) will be hosting their **Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon for City Employees** on **Thursday, November 19, 2020** from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Turkey, dressing, and all the fixings (including homemade desserts) will be prepared and served "TO GO" in appreciation to all City employees. Councilmembers are also invited to pick-up a to-go plate. Due to COVID-19, this will be a DRIVE-THROUGH event only. Employees should come down Olive Street in front of the Fellowship Hall and follow the signs. Special thanks to Pastor Cindy Layton and the FUMC as they sponsored this event for over a decade and the City is truly thankful for their effort(s).

City Manager Update – 11/6/20 (Continued)

Below you will find the City of Smithville Holiday schedule. This information will be communicated on our City website, Facebook Page, and inside the November / December Utility Bill in the message section. In addition, we will post notices on the doors of City Hall one week in advance of the scheduled Holiday.

THANKSGIVING:

- Wednesday, November 25th – (Close at Noon)
- Thursday, November 26th – Holiday
- Friday, November 27th - Holiday

CHRISTMAS:

- Wednesday, December 23rd – (Close at Noon)
- Thursday, December 24th – Holiday
- Friday, December 25th – Holiday

NEW YEARS:

- Friday, January 1st – Holiday

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Have a great weekend, a Happy Thanksgiving, and be sure to THANK a Veteran for their service!

--- Robert ---

PHOTOS – 11/6/20

Sidewalk Repairs at NE 6th and Main



Election Season in Smithville!!!



City Crews Hanging Up Christmas Lights on Main Street and Cleaning-up City Warehouse @ 1000 MLK Blvd.



Miscellaneous Drainage Projects on Marburger and Webb Street



Sidewalk Repair @ 500 Main

