

**MAYOR'S TOWN HALL
COVID-19
JUNE 16, 2020
PUBLIC SUBMITTALS**

Opening Statement:

The Texas Power Switch is a free program endorsed by the city of Watauga that helps residents save on their electricity bills.

About a month ago, electricity providers bid against each other with their best rates in an energy auction. The provider who offered the lowest rate won with rates that are 22% lower than the market average. Residents who accept the 24-month plan are expected to save an average of \$496 per year.

There is no cost to the city to offer this program, nor does the city receive any financial benefit to promote it - it's a service exclusively designed to help residents save money. It's free to sign up and there is no obligation to switch, so tell your friends and neighbors!

Register before June 24th at www.texaspowerswitch.com/watauga to find out if you can lower your bills!

To learn more, join a virtual information session where the Power Switch team will walk you through the winning rate of the current program, and help you to understand your existing bill and potential savings. Bring your bill and your questions! We look forward to hearing from you.

When?

Wednesday, June 17th at 11 AM

Where?

To join the session, just go to the Texas Power Switch Facebook page. The live video will be streaming there.

- Question 1: What has happened to the online crime reports for Watauga listed on "cityprotect.com"? Was this a budget cutback? Is there another online source to view criminal activity in Watauga?

RESPONSE: Thank you for notifying the City the link was broken. City staff has contacted the vendor and the vendor is working with PD and IT staff to resolve the issue.

- Question 2: For organized protests, how much (if any) was spent by the city of Watauga?

RESPONSE: The specific amount is not currently available due to record keeping (payroll submissions) to be completed, but the expenses associated with protests is expected to be minimal.

- Question 3: Since the COVID-19 quarantines, how many City of Watauga employees have been laid off or accepted early retirement? (Please indicate by number in each department.) Also, is there an anticipated date when all City entities will be back to normal operations?

RESPONSE: There have been no layoffs since the COVID-19 quarantine requirement was issued by Governor Abbott. Three (3) employees accepted early retirement in the following departments:

- Finance – 1
- Public Works – 1
- Economic Development – 1

The City does not expect operations to be normal for an unknown period of time. Precautionary measures implemented such as facemasks, temperature screenings and social distancing have become the new normal in the City's operations. It is anticipated that programming at the Library, Community Center and Senior Center will resume on in August 2020 with some limitations who will be required to wear facemasks and/or maintain social distancing. The City is evaluating city-sponsored large gatherings still at this time.

- Question 4: How much (if any) funding and how many supplies has the City of Watauga received from COVID-19? How has the funding

and supplies been distributed? How many area businesses have requested and/or received financial aid?

RESPONSE: The City has received \$6,014.25 in funding for covid-19 for its services as an ambulance provider.

The City Council approved an Interlocal Agreement with Tarrant County to receive COVID-19 authorized/eligible expense reimbursement, but funds have not been received to date.

The City of Watauga has received the following items from the State of Texas and/or Tarrant County:

N95 Mask – 650
Surgical Mask – 1950
Examination Gloves – 300 Pair

Thus far 6 business in Watauga have requested and received 100 Surgical Masks

The Watauga Emergency Management team also assisted North Pointe Health and Rehabilitation in requesting and receiving the following items from the State of Texas thru a STAR request:

Surgical Mask – 300
N-95 Mask – 60

The City does not have a way of tracking financial aid received by businesses from outside sources (forgivable loans for PPP and CARES Act funding). Tarrant County recently released information that has been provided by City Administration to all local businesses regarding Small Business Grants. The application period opens June 22, 2020 and closes on July 1, 2020. City Administration provided details of the grant funding application process, a checklist for completing and submitting the application and a FAQ.

- Question 5: Would like to know if the volume could be adjusted? It was very difficult to hear in person. I also heard was difficult to hear on line.

RESPONSE: The volume is adjustable. However, when listening to the last Council meeting online, the only problems with the volume that can be

identified are when a person(s) spoke outside of their turn in the queue or during the discussion regarding the Trash/Bulk Service. In the case of the Trash/Bulk Service one of the individuals chose to stand out to the right in front of the podium, while wearing a mask and where no microphone exists. Consequently, this person is not audible. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do to enhance audio for persons who do not speak into a microphone.

City staff will continue to request those desiring to speak to do so into the microphone so the viewing public can hear the comments and/or questions.

- Question/Comment 6: I am not in favor of any tax increase. However I am in favor if a tax decrease.

RESPONSE: Thank you for your input. Your comment has been noted.

- Question/Comment 7: Concerning the trash issues at Monday night's meeting, June 8, 2020...It seems even with existing residents who have been here a while are often confused about dates and times for collections. It is great that y'all have made headway with communication between initially the City Manager and the trash company. Then information and questions at Monday's meeting with the Council and two representatives from the company. However I believe there was a missing component which seems to be missing too often in Watauga. Educating the Citizens. Here is the deal. Usually y'all say it is available on the website. Fine. What no one in the City seems to hear is that not everyone has access to the internet. And some who have access do not know how to navigate to many of the sites that are thrown out there as the cure-all. So, please take into consideration that we are a very complex community. Unfortunately many who can sign onto Social Media don't know how to get to or how to navigate if they get to the website. We need to figure out a better way of communicating and include Social Media. Maybe have Code Enforcement hang information tags on everyone's door. Or put stickers on all trash cans in place what their dates are. This needs to be simple but easily understood. Maybe y'all could place a "friendly" post each month on Social Media that cannot be responded to since we know what happens then! A quick post that tells folks something that y'all might note trending, which will be my next question.

Thank you for providing this method of communication. It takes a while for something new to catch on, but don't quit unless we know it isn't adding value after a generous amount of time.

RESPONSE: The City Manager mentioned during the discussion that she would be sending notice to those residents not complying with City Solid Waste Ordinance requirements. The reminder notice will include the language from the ordinance and a request for compliance.

- Question/Comment 8: I am tired, but I am going to try to explain this and ask for help. Trending on Social Media have been issues with water meter covers. It nearly blew up recently. MANY RESIDENTS shared their horror stories about the covers. Everything from cracked covers,,cracked for years! MANY said their covers are not put back on correctly. There is a question about who is responsible for cleaning out mud and debris from the opening in the ground where the meter is. Apparently there is a problem with the over for "stuff" to get down in there? Someone said the City is supposed to replace cracked/broken covers. that the City is responsible to keep them clean inside...I remember in the past someone said she broke her ankle because of the cover. this time a lady said she almost fell into it. And many stories shared about this. Some did say they reported and got action. Others said it took many phone calls. This is one of those areas that if people know the rules they will follow them. There are folks who will never call or email, etc. but the problem is still there. Is there a standard that those reading meters put the covers on properly? it seems it should be a standard if a cover is cracked, the person reading could have a tag to put on report...new cover required..present cover is cracked, broken or whatever. They are the front guard since they are reading the meters. and if there is a lot of mud or debris, what should be done? I don't have the answers, I just report what is a concern because that is what I do. Please don't toss this away without some action item. As one gentleman said, his has been cracked for 18 years! Hey! Don't shoot the messenger!

RESPONSE: City staff is aware of the issues concerning meter lids. 100 new lids were ordered last week and staff will be replacing 100 meter lids throughout the City.

- Question/Comment 9: Please continue with the weekly updates, Mr. Mayor. You have an opportunity to remind people of upcoming meetings the following week, letting us know what the City is working on and maybe timelines..EG, what streets will be worked on the following week...asking citizens to make sure they send questions into your Virtual Town Halls. I haven't noticed how many people are viewing your weekly messages or watching the town halls. If that number is posted I am going to start looking for it! In the same venue the question came up if y'all know how many viewers y'all have on the Council Meetings? Since it is fed different ways, do y'all have a count?

RESPONSE: Views for the Mayor Message's and all other videos on YouTube are displayed on YouTube directly below the video. The City also has access to YouTube Analytics on the backend of our account.

The Virtual Town Halls and other Board Meetings streamed from the City Web-site using CivicClerk do not presently offer any analytics in regards to stream views. Currently, the City's analytic abilities are limited to the Agendas and Minutes page itself only. The City web site offers analytics in regard to page views and as such, the City can see how many views the Agenda and Minute page receives on a daily basis. Although this number isn't necessarily a representation of the number of views a particular meeting receives, based on the day and time a view occurs, it can be a fair barometer of the number of citizens which may access the page during a meeting stream, although it is not definitive.

The City does not have access to any information regarding viewership of any of the three City cable channels which also live stream the meetings.

- Question/Comment 10: I want to thank you, Mayor Miner, City Manager Gardner, and Council for standing fast and taking a strong lead through the past few months. It could not have been easy. Our city, not unlike most all cities, have had to make our way through uncharted waters. As, we move, into the second half of 2020, I will continue to pray and support our city in all the ways I can. I will also continue to do the same for each of you. We have some big, future, plans for Watauga. Most all of them are good ideas; intended to generate positive, growth and promote a strong

economy. Each of these new plans, reflect hard work and time, put in by each of you and several other city employees. I am asking each and every one of you to truly stop and seriously consider whether or not, this is the best time to move forward on business projects, that will generate new debt, because of the serious economic instability here in Watauga, in Tarrant County, in Texas and across our nation. I am asking for us to simply maintain what must be maintained, pay for what we are already committed to pay for, over the next six months and not spend another dime on new projects or create any new debt. We have no real idea what to expect in our economy, as we approach the end of 2020. Would it be possible, to just hold off on some of the new spending, until after the first of the year? I am pleading with you to holdfast for now and move the new wants forward by at least six months and readdress them again in 2021. Then, if we, as a city, are in a better place; if the overall economy has truly rebounded...then we can move forward with new business...making Watauga a great place to live.

RESPONSE: The projects proposed in the bond issuance total \$3 million and are necessary projects. City Administration worked with Department Heads to reduce the Capital Improvements Plan for the very reasons you mentioned.

- Question/Comment 11: Based on the architectural drawing from the March 2020 WEDC meeting for the Incubator Project: Looking at the drawing, since are going to provide what I see in the design already and include all of the services shown here; then why not just go ahead and add more trees, picnic tables, some plants and trails or walkways, which will allow it to function as both an Food Truck Incubator Project and a park? We get two for the price of one, avoid dealing with a neglected area should the food trucks stop coming in a few years and land ends up being what it was intended to be initially...a park.

RESPONSE: The incubator project is in draft form currently. The City Manager, Public Works Director, City Engineer and WEDC Board are working together to finalize the project. Public input is appreciated and will be considered.