

## November 2019 Column

As a rule, city managers in Texas don't serve long tenures. They tend to come and go with the wind.

Doug Faseler is an exception to the rule. He has been serving the City of Seguin for 24 years, and has been City Manager since 2006, which was my first year on City Council. He's the only City Manager I've ever worked with, and he's one of the best in the business. We have been truly blessed to have him. As most people know, Doug is retiring, and his last day with the city will be this Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

I often joke with him about not forgetting that his most important duty as city manager is to make the mayor look good! What is amazing is that he has taken it seriously, and carried out that duty with incredible skill. He has indeed made me look good. Yes, the council and I form the policy, vision and direction, and approve the budgets and spending and tax rate. However, Doug was the one who had to get things done. He had to actually be the one to let us know if our policies, vision, direction and budgets were even possible. Countless times, he was the one with the creativity that allowed us to fulfill our goals. Countless times, he would create alternative methods for some of our crazy ideas, and made them work in spite of ourselves. Countless times, he moved proactively to diffuse a crisis in the making.

He performed his duties with a calm dignity. I've spent a lot of time with Doug over the past 13 years, and I have never seen him angry. I've never heard him raise his voice to anyone. I've seen him express disappointment, joy, disgust, pride and despair – virtually every human emotion - but I've never seen him angry. That is the hallmark of his extraordinary character.

He's had to make tough, gut-wrenching decisions concerning personnel that he could have shrugged off and set aside. But he made those decisions and acted on them, because they were the right thing to do. The general public has no idea how difficult it is to make those decisions, and to keep personnel matters confidential when one is dealing with issues concerning a popular figure in the community. I can tell you with absolute surety that Doug always did the right thing.

This community owes a great deal to Doug for so many things. One particular incident that stands out is his singular effort to bring about what we call the "CPS Settlement". When Rio Nogales Power sold its generation plant on IH10 to CPS in 2012, the plant immediately became tax exempt. It meant that Seguin, along with Guadalupe County and the Seguin ISD would suffer huge losses in tax revenue, since CPS is a tax-exempt entity.

Without the aid or support of others, Doug acted on his own and negotiated a \$20 million settlement from CPS to ease the immediate shock of lost tax revenue for all the affected entities. His solitary efforts rewarded not just Seguin, but the entire area, since more than half of that settlement went to the county and the ISD, neither of whom showed any real gratitude at the time. We have used proceeds from that settlement all over Seguin to help fund capital projects, street repairs, parks improvements and downtown revitalization. This guy brought about a \$20 million windfall to the taxpayers of this entire community, and we still had people complaining he was over-paid!

Think about all the projects Doug has directed since 2006. Major street and drainage improvements, expanding our in-house road maintenance program with 5-year rolling plan, negotiating lower rates for our electric utility, guiding our water partnership with Schertz, strong economic development, downtown revitalization, new and improved parks including Walnut Springs Park and Park West, the spectacular new public library, restoration of our old hydro-electric plant into the Power Plant Restaurant and refinancing our debt with historically low interest rates. We have beautiful new city facilities to better serve the public, including our Utilities Operations Center, Animal Control Facility, and our new Development Center downtown.

I know I've left a lot of things off that list. Sorry, Doug, but I just can't fit it all in.

Since this is Thanksgiving season, I ask all of you to thank God for sending us Doug Faseler. He has truly been a huge positive force in building Seguin into one of the greatest small towns in Texas.

Thanks, Doug.

Gosh I love this town!