

# SMCISD Trustees to discuss COVID-19 booster incentive, election method

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MANAGING EDITOR

The San Marcos Consolidated ISD Board of Trustees will discuss offering an incentive for district employees who receive a COVID-19 booster.

The board will discuss and take action regarding the incentive during Monday's regular meeting.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved COVID-19 booster vaccines for all adults 18 years and older. The CDC

also approved boosters for those 16 and 17 years old.

The board of trustees previously approved a one-time \$250 COVID-19 vaccination incentive in July. District employees who were eligible to receive the vaccine but cannot do so because of health conditions or religious beliefs will also be able to receive the stipend. The COVID-19 vaccination stipend was estimated to cost SMCISD approximately \$300,000, according to the district.

Trustee Miguel Arredon-

do requested the item be placed on the agenda.

The board will also consider adopting an employee retention payment for all SMCISD employees through the 2021-22 academic year. If approved, the stipend would be paid on or about Dec. 17 and on May 25, 2022 to those employees who were employed on Dec. 13 and remain employed through the conclusion of the 2021-22 school year as well as employees who resign during the academic year for health-re-

lated reasons. The district would pay employees \$1,000 with a payment of \$500 in December and a second payment of \$500 on May 25.

The trustees will hold a discussion and take possible action on the method of election of school trustees. The board will weigh changing from its current five single-member district trustees and two at-large trustees or change to seven single-member dis-

SEE SMCISD PAGE 8A

## Texas Briefly

### Man accused of killing Texas officer out of hospital, jailed

MESQUITE (AP) — The man accused of fatally shooting a suburban Dallas police officer last week has been discharged from the hospital and booked into jail.

Court records show that Jamie Jaramillo, 37, was arraigned on a capital murder charge late Thursday. Jail records show he was being held Friday in Dallas County jail on \$2 million bond. It was unclear if he had an attorney.

Jaramillo is accused of fatally shooting Mesquite Officer Richard Houston, 46, on Dec. 3 while he re-

sponded to a call about a disturbance in the parking lot of a supermarket.

An arrest warrant affidavit said that when Houston arrived at the parking lot, Jaramillo, his wife, their daughter and another woman were involved in an altercation.

The affidavit says that the daughter told police that she and her mother believed Jaramillo was cheating with another woman. The affidavit says that when Houston went to talk to Jaramillo, he pulled a gun and shot Houston before shooting himself.

The affidavit says Jaramillo's wife then took the gun and threatened the woman with whom she believed

SEE BRIEFLY PAGE 9A

# Wimberley City Council approves Hotel Occupancy Tax

STAFF REPORTS

The Wimberley City Council approved a 7% Hotel Occupancy Tax during its Dec. 2 meeting.

The HOT will be effective April 1, 2022 when the City of Wimberley will begin collecting the tax from lodging owners within the city limits and in the city's extra-territorial jurisdiction. The city said lodging owners charge the tax as a separate line item to tourists who stay overnight.

"This is a tax on tourists — lodging owners just collect it and remit it to the city, like a sales tax," Coun-

cilmember Jim Chiles.

Wimberley was previously one of the only Texas tourist towns that did not charge a Hotel Occupancy Tax. The city said neighboring smaller cities, including Dripping Springs, Blanco, Johnson City and Boerne charge the tax at a rate of 7%, as do larger cities including San Marcos, Kyle, Austin and San Antonio.

"All of these towns have been collecting this tax for years and spend the funds in compliance with state law and to the benefit of both lodging owners and their citizens," Councilmember Rebecca Minn-

ick said. "We have much in common with these towns and we can do the same."

In conjunction with approving the tax, the city is preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a compliance company to ensure that all lodging facilities, including Short-Term Rentals, are counted and remitting the tax, said City Administrator Mike Boese.

Per the ordinance, the city will form a HOT Advisory Committee made up of lodging owners. The committee will make recommendations in collaboration with the city council, on how the funds are allocated, according to Boese. The city

is currently taking applications for seven positions.

Wimberley's HOT was previously enacted in 2015 at a 5% rate. The council serving in 2018 repealed the tax. Approximately \$142,000 remained in the fund in 2019 and was allocated for the city's popular wayfinding signs. There are currently 11 signs installed and more are in work. The remainder have been earmarked for the visitor kiosk at the Oak Drive Hospitality Center, currently under construction.

Council has proposed plans to disburse the funds

SEE WIMBERLEY PAGE 8A

## DIEGO FROM PG. 1A

rero, who served as San Marcos Mayor from 2010-2016. "One afternoon I came home a little early. I figured well; I'm done with my day let's go see what Diego's up to."

He checked all the spots. He walked around... he couldn't find him.

As panic ensued Guerrero said he began frantically walking around the neighborhood looking for his land-dwelling reptile.

"At this point I'm just sick. My brother comes over — my parents come over, all eager to help. We go door-to-door looking for Diego," Guerrero said. "We finally ran into a woman who said, 'Oh yeah, I saw a tortoise walking down the street at around 2:30 p.m.' so this is 30 minutes after I got home."

Guerrero and his team walked all over his Blanco Garden neighborhood until they came to an apartment complex and nearby Dairy Queen where they picked up another clue — and it was not good news.

"We ran into a guy who told us they saw a tortoise and a car stopped and picked it up," Guerrero said. "That was about 3 p.m. and fits the timeline. By now it was almost 10 p.m. and getting ready to rain."

Despite the grim news, Guerrero wasn't going to give up and launched a social media campaign immediately announcing his friend was missing.

"I posted on Facebook and instantly began receiving a lot of comments," Guerrero said. "Lots of people were on the lookout. Eventually I got this video from this woman who asked if this was my tortoise? It was of a man holding him and carrying him to Thompson's Island."

The news didn't help the anxiety Guerrero was feeling. Diego wasn't a type of turtle that belonged in the water so all he could do was hope for the best and continue his search.

Days and weeks went by,

and hope began to dwindle that Guerrero would ever see his beloved Diego again when the unbelievable happened.

It was on day 38 into the disappearance of Diego when Guerrero received a call from Ben Kvanli, local river enthusiast and more notable, an Olympic kayak competitor. While on the river Kvanli spotted something on the shore. Upon closer examination, he discovered the 25-pound Diego trudging through the brush and in good condition.

"Ben sent me a text and said, 'Hey, are you still looking for your tortoise?' I said, 'yes,'" Guerrero recalled. "It was about 7 p.m. before we were able to reconnect and sure enough, I received two videos of Diego — I told him I'll be right over."

Guerrero said he became a "blubbing mess," when he saw his friend.

Kvanli found Diego near the State Fish Hatchery, the south side of the river closest to the fish hatchery on Dec. 3.

"He was dehydrated, excited, hyperactive and a bit dirty but healthy and happy to be home," Guerrero said. "He was happy to be home and celebrated by chasing both dogs all over the house."

Guerrero said he had received messages of support telling him instances such as his tortoise escape happen more often than he thinks.

"I can't thank the Kvanli family enough for helping in the search and eventual return of Diego," Guerrero said. "It meant the world to me."

Kvanli said he was happy to reunite Diego with Guerrero.

"I'm just glad Diego is home safe with my neighbor in Blanco Gardens," Kvanli said. "The cats at my place on the river loved playing around him. Diego is very social and cuddly for a tortoise."

Diego has been invited to



Diego, a South American Tortoise, went missing from his owner Daniel Guerrero — former San Marcos Mayor. Above, Diego and Guerrero were recently reunited after a month-long search. Photo courtesy of Daniel Guerrero

Crockett Elementary later this month to share his story.

The moral of this fable belongs to Guerrero. Never lose hope.

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### Aquifer & Spring Flow conditions

Area Index	Daily Readings	10-day Average
Bexar	662.4 msl	664.6 msl
Uvalde	861.6 msl	861.6 msl
Comal Springs	277 cfs	281 cfs
San Marcos Springs	177 cfs	179 cfs

Readings from December 11  
edwardsaquifer.org

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