

# THE CITY OF GROVES, TEXAS

Invites your interest in the position of

**CITY MANAGER**



## MISSION STATEMENT

The goals of the City Government are to create a strong, safe and clean community, foster a high quality of life, promote neighborhood strength and integrity, to support sound community and economic development and to conserve and wisely utilize City Resources to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of City Residents.

Visit Groves at <https://www.cigrovestx.com>



## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

If you are looking for a smaller, welcoming community that is close to urban amenities, Groves, Texas may be the place for you. Located in southeast Texas (Jefferson County), covering approximately 5 square miles, a population of approximately 18,000, within a major national strategic economic and recreational geographic area, Groves offers a tremendously high quality of life. It is one of 9 cities in Jefferson County, comprising of a trade area population of 248,849. The Southeast Texas Economic Development Foundation serves a trade area of 425,614. Groves is within an area that has capitalized as a convenient hub for regional, national, and worldwide commerce. The region is connected by Interstate 10 as well as US Highways 69, 96, 90, 105 and 287. Located within the robust and dynamic petrochemical industry region of Southeast Texas, including part of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and most of the Texas portion of the Intracoastal Waterway, the area is also crossed by numerous rivers and streams, the largest being the Sabine and Neches Rivers. The large bodies of water in Southeast Texas are Galveston Bay and Sabine Lake, with the large reservoirs of East Texas just to the north.

Groves is a great location for those looking to make a difference in a City with a strong sense of community. Its residents pride themselves on their hospitality and are always willing to lend a hand or offer a friendly smile – a community known for its neighborliness and never-ending commitment to helping one another. There are long-time generations of families (and friends) who continue to live in the community and enjoy the benefits of a smaller community, but with services and amenities of a significantly larger community. Groves is within approximately 20 minutes to the more urban Beaumont and within an hour and a half of the Houston metropolitan area. Local schools enjoy the support of the community where the Port Neches-Groves Independent School District is routinely ranked as a leader within the state of Texas. In the fall of 2019, voters approved a \$130 million school bond by an overwhelming 2/3 support.

Historically, Groves has been a preferred bedroom community, but within the last several years has seen new economic development investment with restaurant and retail, including new elementary schools under construction by the critically acclaimed Port Neches-Groves Independent School District. Additionally, the City of Groves opened a modern, new Fire Station in 2021. The new station was funded by Groves Economic Development Corporation.

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Groves' residents enjoy access to a variety of local amenities and recreational activities. The City has several well-maintained parks and playgrounds including John Spikes Memorial Park. Residents can enjoy picnicking, walking trails, fishing, and other outdoor activities. Sabine Lake, a 90,000-acre lake, is located within 30 minutes of Groves and serves as a regional attraction. Within minutes to under an hour are several public golf courses. A variety of popular annual events take place in Groves which are enjoyed by both residents and visitors. Among them are the Pecan Festival Pageant and Parade, the Christmas Parade, the Back to School Blast, Springfest and a Chamber of Commerce held Easter egg hunt.

### **Historic Notables**

Asa E. Groves, a pioneer Port Arthurian and the editor of the paper that is now the Port Arthur News, gave his name to the subdivision that would later be Groves, Texas. Rice farming was the main occupation of the few settlers in the Groves area around the early 1900's. In 1919, Wiley Choate, then employed by Griffing Brothers Nursery, supervised the planting of 2,500 pecan trees that made Groves one the most beautiful communities in the area. Groves is currently landlocked after early community leaders elected to not pursue annexation during the 1940's and 1950's. It wasn't until 1961 when residents changed the City charter to allow annexations. However, according to historical records, most of the adjacent cities had annexed around Groves leaving no further territory available for annexation.

**Groves Public Library**, a community staple dating back 1930, is staffed by talented librarians, a source of community pride and provides numerous programs to the community including Tuesday evening family nights.

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**ABOUT THE CITY GOVERNMENT**

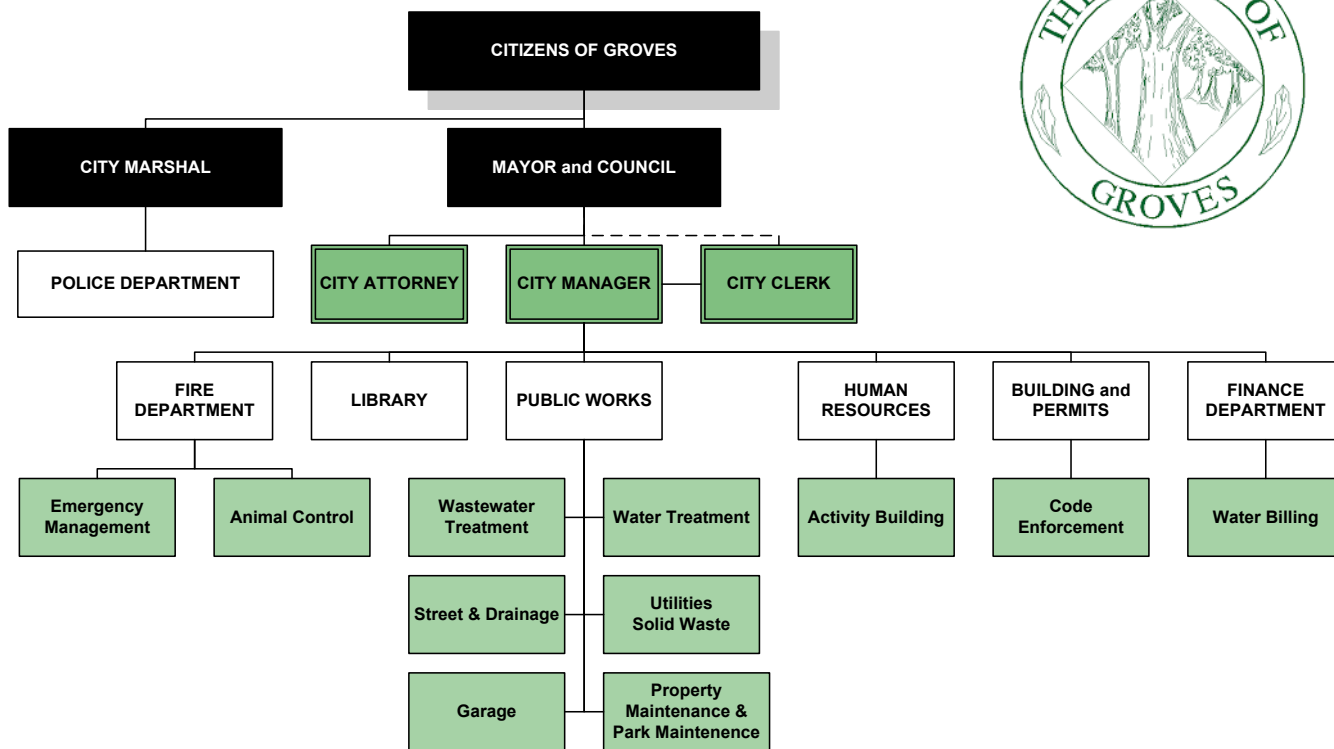
Groves is a Council-Manager government that operates with an adopted City Charter. In addition to the City Manager, Charter officers include the City Attorney. Both report to and are appointed by the five-member City Council. Additionally, Groves Police Department is managed by an elected City Marshal. However, the Police Department budget is part of the annual City budget submitted to the City Council by the City Manager. City Council elections are non-partisan and the Mayor and Councilmembers are elected at-large every two years. City Councilmembers represent four geographic Wards in City-wide elections. Groves has enjoyed extraordinary stability in City Managers, with the last manager retiring with nearly twenty years of service. The Mayor presides over Council meetings, participates and votes as a member of Council but does not have veto authority. The Mayor does exercise the authority to approve the items placed on the Council agenda. The Mayor also functions as the official head of the Council for all ceremonial purposes.

Groves Mayor and Council	
Chris Borne	Mayor
Mark McAdams	Councilmember, Ward I
Paul Oliver	Councilmember, Ward II
Rob Vensel	Councilmember, Ward III
Rhonda Dugas	Councilmember, Ward IV

Groves is a full-service municipality providing public works, utilities, human resources, building, zoning, library, police, and fire. A small, but mighty staff of 104 FTEs with 10 part-timers provides services through ten departments. Police and Fire have recognized

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## City of Groves, Texas Organizational Chart



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bargaining units. The City prides itself on a very low turnover rate, with many junior and senior staff members serving at least ten years or more on average.

The City is fiscally strong with growing revenues, experiencing growth in its retail sales tax base. Revenues continue to increase with the primary source being property taxes. The property tax base grew last year by over \$96 million, with overall net taxable values exceeding \$1.046 billion. Sales taxes are forecast to increase by over 9% by end of the current fiscal year. The primary property taxes were decreased slightly from \$65.34 to \$63.59. The total budget for the current fiscal year is a responsible \$24.6 million. The City created an Groves Economic Development Corporation (GEDC) which is used as a catalyst for business and community development and a funding mechanism for needed public infrastructure as well. The GEDC is administered by a Board of Directors comprised of four City Council Members, the Chamber of Commerce Director and two community members. The City continues to see substantial progress in neighborhood revitalization in their long-standing, community supported "Peace and Dignity" program, which has been beautifying Groves neighborhoods for nearly twenty years.

The City has long-standing partnerships with its adjacent cities for reducing service and capital costs by sharing police dispatch, information technology and providing mutual aid for fire protection.

### **ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES**

Primary issues for the current and next two fiscal years include:

- Priority infrastructure projects/improvements to the wastewater treatment plant; sewer mainlines along with applicable lift stations, including storm drain system, and local streets.
- Economic development growth
- Downtown revitalization
- Fiscal transparency and integrity

### **THE CITY MANAGER**

The City Charter specifies that the Council shall appoint the City Manager and City Attorney. The City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization and is the chief policy advisor to the City Council.

### **POSITION REQUIREMENTS**

#### ***Education and Experience***

Requires a combination of education and experience equivalent to attainment of an MPA or MBA; with an economics and finance emphasis as applicable; with at least 7 years of increasingly responsible local government management experience gained in a community or other public agency with similar complexity to Groves is preferred. Experience in Texas is not a prerequisite as long as other relevant and desired expertise is represented. Recent experience as a department head, assistant or deputy city manager may also be considered.

#### ***Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate***

*The Mayor and Council are interested in their next City Manager with skills and/or experience in the following areas:*

- Understanding of best practices in construction, procurement, pavement management preservation and complex infrastructure delivery models involving water, wastewater systems and streets infrastructure.
- Experience in pursuing other funding opportunities and increasing the City's ability to access all available non-City funding sources such as federal or state grants or local government assistance programs for water and wastewater improvements – notably wastewater treatment plant upgrades and trunk mainline(s) replacement.

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- Financial knowledge and responsibility.
- Innovative practices and affiliated technology that improve systems, processes, efficiencies, and costs.
- Financial management, including experience in strengthening city finances, through efficiencies, system improvements, innovation; evaluating new revenue opportunities and strategies for reducing operating costs.
- Business and economic development with an emphasis in downtown development.
- Cultivating a culture of collaboration between Council and staff.
- A track record of embracing professional development, knowledge transfer and empowerment of City staff.
- Collective bargaining.
- Working with and developing relationships with area cities, the Council of Governments, school and special districts.

***Additional notable qualities to include:***

- Transparent and ethical leadership.
- Has integrity and honesty — creates a culture of accountability throughout the organization.
- Treats everyone with fairness, dignity, and professionalism.
- Strong communication skills with the ability to speak extemporaneously with professionalism .events
- Committed to providing regular updates on emerging issues and the City's progress toward meeting the goals set by the Mayor and Council.
- Strong time management and organizational skills.

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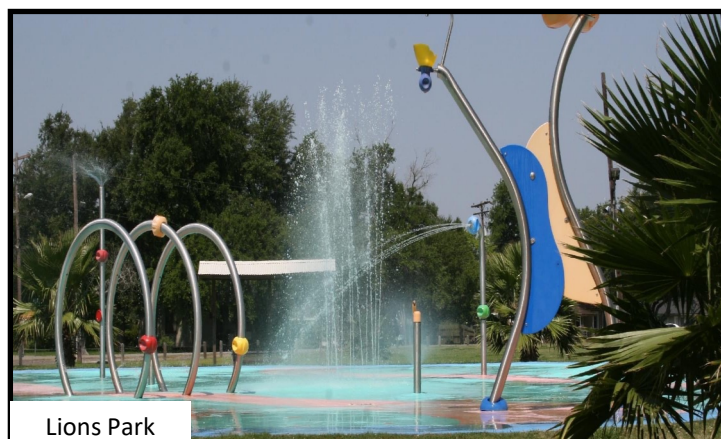
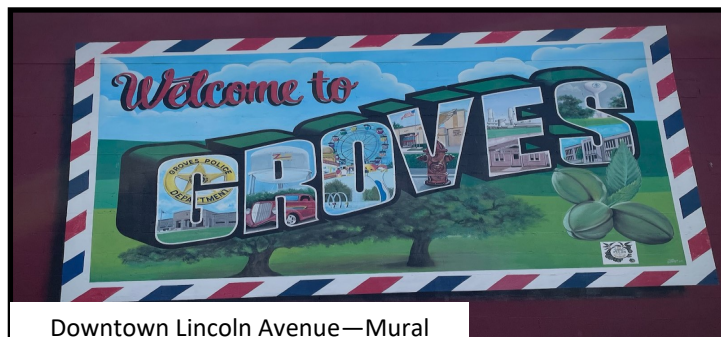
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- Goal oriented, strategic thinker who understands the value and importance of challenging the team to deliver on high standards.
- Takes the initiative on issues and challenges.
- Knowledgeable of City ordinances, policies, enabling legislation, the Texas Open Meeting Act and the Texas Public Information Act.
- Responsive to inquiries, respectfully but candidly; able to manage expectations when dealing with the public and members of the Council.
- Politically astute but nonpolitical with the ability to act impartially and independently while supporting the goals of the Council.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills with an outgoing and friendly personality; is someone who can engage with residents and the business community; is willing to be the “face of the community”.
- Ability and appreciation of developing and building relationships with core values of integrity and trust.
- Calm and approachable demeanor even while under pressure.
- Has active listening skills with the understanding that the City Manager will serve as an ambassador for the City, often representing the City Council.

**Leadership style With Staff**

- An ethical leader who inspires and supports the work of the team.
- A strong listener and communicator who inspires and empowers staff to be creative; open to new ideas;
- Is fair, evenhanded and consistent.
- Supports continuing and ongoing professional development.

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- An innovator, who can bring a fresh perspective to complex problems.
- Maintains proper context and perspective in an active social media environment particularly in the face of criticism.
- Appropriate technical competencies in areas involving infrastructure financing, developing priorities, and articulating a sense of urgency as appropriate.
- Experience or exposure to managing or overseeing community-wide emergencies.
- A true servant leader who solicits, listens to and accepts ideas and input from department heads and other staff members.
- Functions as an effective bridge between the City Council and staff.
- Trusts and supports employees, does not micromanage them but inspires them to perform at their highest potential.

#### ***With the Community***

The City Council considers the role of the City Manager to be involved with organizations in the community and, in some cases, be the “face of the community.” Developing a relationship with the Groves Chamber of Commerce and its new leadership, is an example. Being accessible, knowledgeable and a conduit for problem-solving is important but concurrently being able to manage the expectations when requests for service are submitted.

#### ***With Other Governments including County, State and Schools***

- The successful candidate will continue (and where needed, enhance) working relationships with area Cities, State, County, School and special purpose Districts to foster cooperative approaches to public service.
- Lead the City’s active involvement with the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission and the Southeast Texas Economic Development Foundation.

#### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

Beginning salary for the position will be highly competitive and negotiable based on qualifications and experience. Groves provides excellent employee benefits including a generous paid time off program which with a family care feature, medical, dental, vision, prescription drug, retirement (with options), life insurance, AD&D, tuition reimbursement, an employee assistance program and more.

#### **APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

The recruitment will remain open until the position is filled. The first review of applications is scheduled for June 9, 2023.

**To apply**, please send a letter of application, detailed resume, and current salary to:

**Robert E. Slavin, President or John Kross, Southwest Regional Manager**



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***Electronic submissions are preferred.***