

Memo

To: Scott Sellers, City Manager

From: Mariana Espinoza, Parks and Recreation Director

cc: Jerry Hendrix, Chief of Staff

Date: July 5, 2021

Re: 4th of July Fireworks Update

This memo is in regard to the 2021 4th of July Fireworks Show. As you are aware, the planned 30 minutes, 1.3G show was not fully launched. Only about 1/3 of the show was launched before the Firework Vendor, American Fireworks, called the show. The show was called short because the fuse box was programmed to the wrong channel, and the fuse box was not getting the signal to launch.

An overview of the events that took place Sunday, July 4, 2021, is as follows:

- ~8:30 a.m. Parks and Recreation Director, Mariana Espinoza (Mariana), spoke to the Firework Vendor, Steve Davis (Coach), and confirmed that the Fireworks Company would be on-site by 2:30 p.m. to set up the show.
- 3:00 p.m. Mariana arrived to Lake Kyle to load up staff supplies and proceed to Plum Creek Golf Course.
- 3:30 p.m. Mariana and Park Maintenance Equipment Operators, Stacy Anderson (Stacy) and Benito Pereda (Benito), placed event banners and launch zone area barricades.
- 4:15 p.m. Recreation Programmer, Aimee Garcia (Aimee), and Summer Camp Staff placed event signage including sponsors signs and radio station signs.
- 4:45 p.m. Mariana, Benito and Stacy visited Coach at the launch zone to deliver the check payment for the firework show. Coach informed Mariana that he did not know if he would be able to get the whole show set up in time. Coach informed Mariana that three of his set up crew team members just decided not to show up (apparently, they were tired from all the other shows they had leading up to this show). Coach informed Mariana that he was working on getting other setup crews from the surrounding areas to assist him. Meanwhile, Mariana asked how we could help. Coach said he just needed more hands. Benito stayed to help

Coach setup. Mariana called Aimee and the summer camp staff to also head to the launch zone to see how they could help. Mariana called Chief of Staff, Jerry Hendrix (Jerry), to inform him. Mariana informed Jerry that Coach was working on getting backup crews on site to get the show completed.

- 5:00 p.m. Mariana and Stacy went to Waterleaf Park to pick up the gators. Benito, Aimee, and Summer Camp Staff stayed at the launch zone to assist with set up.
- 5:30 p.m. Mariana returned to the launch zone. Coach was able to get some other crew members to help out, but they still needed help. Mariana had Park Maintenance Technicians, Art Zamarippa, Mario Bautista, Joe Villarreal, Martin Rangel and Jimmy Gonzales, arrive at the launch zone to help as needed, in addition to Benito and Stacy.
- 6:30 p.m. Mariana held an event debriefing with all staff working the event (excluding those that were already at the launch zone) including Park Maintenance Staff, Seasonal Summer Camp and Pool Staff, Environmental Services and Trades Staff, and CERT Volunteers. Staff and volunteers were provided a walkie-talkie, water, and a flashlight. All staff and volunteers departed the Park Maintenance Shop, located at 225 Veterans Drive, and reported to their assigned locations at either the Plum Creek Golf Course or the Hays Performing Arts Center.
- 7:15 p.m. Aimee and Recreation Programmer, Shane Boyer, took the lead on making sure all staff and volunteers got to their assigned locations while Mariana returned to the launch zone for an update on setup.
- ~7:30 p.m. Coach informed Mariana that he would not be able to get all three planned trailers set up. He said that there would only be two trailers, and the show would be about 25 minutes, not 30. Mariana called Jerry to update him. Mariana also called City Manager, Scott Sellers to update him.
- ~7:45 p.m. Mariana saw Mayor Mitchell in the firework zone. Mariana updated Mayor Mitchell and took him in a gator to visit with Coach. Coach also updated the Mayor.
- ~9:00 p.m. Mariana visited the launch zone to confirm that the show was set and it was time to secure the perimeter (all staff in place, and do not come near the launch zone). At this time, Coach asked Mariana if they could have 30 more minutes. Mariana told Coach that the launch time, coordinated with the radio station was 9:15 p.m. Mariana called City Manager, Scott Sellers, to see what his thoughts were on informing the Communications Department that we would start the show at 9:30 p.m. instead of 9:15 p.m. Because of the coordination with the radio station, Mariana informed Coach that we would have to launch at 9:20 p.m. Coach said okay.
- ~9:17 p.m. Mariana sent the group text out to staff working the event and made an announcement on the radio for all staff and volunteers to stay in place and secure the perimeter. Aimee made a second walkie talkie announcement. Mariana was told by staff at the launch zone (Benito and Stacy) that launch time would be in 5 minutes.

- ~9:20 p.m. Staff at the launch zone, Benito and Stacy, informed Mariana that Coach told them 10 more minutes and staff had to move a trailer out of the launch zone.
- 9:20-9:42 The firework company worked to get the fuse boxes turned on.
- 9:44 p.m. The firework show began.
- 10:05 p.m. Show paused. Mariana contacted staff at the launch zone. They confirmed that the firework company was trying the figure out what went wrong.
- 10:07 p.m. Show began again
- 10:09 p.m. Show paused again. Mariana communicated with the staff at the launch zone who informed her that there was a misconnection of signal trying, and the firework company was trying to reconnect. Mariana sent out an update text to all staff. Aimee sent out a message on the walkie talkies.
- 10:11 p.m. Mariana texted all staff to stay in place for 25 more minutes until it was clear to come near the launch zone. Aimee sent out a message on the walkie talkies.
- 10:13 p.m. Mariana was notified by staff at the launch zone that the firework company was unable to reconnect and had to call the show.
- 10:30 p.m. Volunteers departed.
- 10:54 p.m. All staff and volunteers started to clean the debris.
- 12:00 a.m. All staff departed.

Monday, July 5, 2021

- 6:30 p.m. Staff (Park Maintenance Trails Technicians, Susan, Steven, Summer Camp Jaime and Taylor, and Benito) reported to Plum Creek Golf Course to clean Debris
- 8:30 a.m. Benito and Mariana picked up all signage.
- 10:00 a.m. Mariana spoke to Coach on the phone to ask questions that would help determine what went wrong. Mariana confirmed that coach will be able to be in attendance at the Tuesday, July 6, 2021, City Council Meeting for the 4th of July Recap Item.
- 10:45 a.m. Mariana spoke to Coach again to clarify some questions and discuss possibilities for rectifying the incident.

QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ASKED:

Was this the same company as the 2019 incident?

No, this was not the same company as the 2019 incident. The company we used this year was American Fireworks. This was the same company we used last year in 2020.

Why didn't we use a different company?

Last year, 2020, was the first year we used American Fireworks. We had a great experience with American Fireworks, and they put on a good show. We did not see any need to seek a new vendor this year.

Will there be another show for the unused fireworks?

At this time, there is not a definite answer. Coach expressed that he would love the opportunity to show the full 30-minute show that they had planned. However, that decision needs to be made by the owner of his company. Coach stated that the owner of his company just got out of the hospital, but he will get back to us ASAP.

What happened?

The show was called short because the fuse box was programmed to the wrong channel, and the fuse box was not getting the signal to launch.

What else could have led to the fuse boxes not being connected correctly?

The firework company had 3 crew members decide not to show up at the last minute. Coach expressed that they were setting up very fast, and somewhere during the process, something did not get connected correctly.

How much has American Fireworks been paid?

American Fireworks has not been made anything. When Mariana went to deliver the check at 4:45 p.m., Sunday, July 4, 2020¹ and learned that there was a possibility that they may not be able to get the full 30-minute show connected, Mariana decided to hold on to the check.

Thank you,
Mariana

ENCL: American Fireworks Contract, American Fireworks Insurance, Event overview and EAP